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ABSTRACT

The effect of successful school practices on educational outcomes of disadvantaged students is examined in this project report. A second focus is to determine ways in which state education agencies can support local school improvement efforts in the secondary and middle schools. As part of a larger long-term effort to improve the educational achievement of children considered at risk, the study involves a review of current research, expert consultation, and site visitation of 19 exemplary schools. Information is provided on the school improvement initiation process; methods for improvement, which include management, instruction, and early intervention and categorical programs such as Chapter 1, special education, and bilingual education; staff training; evaluation and accountability; parent involvement; community and business support; and state intervention. Recommendations include provision of technical assistance by state education agencies, identification of successful schools, improved teacher training, increasing the priority of early childhood education, use of innovative instructional methods and incentives, improved program information dissemination, and promotion of family and community support programs. The appendix lists the participating schools from nine states: California, Connecticut, Florida, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. (LMI)

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Voices from Successful Schools

Elements of Improved Schools Serving At Risk Students and How State Education Agencies Can Support More Local School Improvement

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Council of Chief State School Officers

March 1990

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The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nationwide non-profit organization of the 57 public officials who head departments of public education in every state, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Dependents Schools, and five extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO seeks its members' consensus on major education issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, to federal agencies, to Congress, and to the public. Through its structure of committees and task forces, the Council responds to a broad range of concerns about education and provides leadership on major education issues.

Because the Council represents the chief education administrator, it has access to the educational and governmental establishment in each state and to the national influence that accompanies this unique position. CCSSO forms coalitions with many other education organizations and is able to provide leadership for a variety of policy concerns that affect elementary and secondary education. Thus, CCSSO members are able to act cooperatively on matters vital to the education of America's young people.

The CCSSO Resource Center on Educational Equity provides services designed to achieve equity in education for minorities, women and girls, and for disabled, limited English proficient, and low-income students. The Center is responsible for managing and staffing a variety of CCSSO leadership initiatives to provide better educational services to children and youth at risk to school success.

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PREFACE

In the spring of 1988, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) Resource Center on Educational Equity initiated a project to examine successful school practices for children and youth at risk of school failure. The objectives of the examination were to learn about successful methods of educating all children and to determine ways state education agencies can encourage and support local school improvement efforts in elementary and middle schools. As our primary source of information, we sought out the insights and advice of school faculty and administrators.

This project, entitled "Voices from Successful Schools," was part of a larger, long-term effort by the Council to improve the educational achievement of children considered at risk of school failure. In November 1987, the chief state school officers unanimously adopted a policy statement, "Assuring School Success for Students At Risk," which called for high school graduation for virtually all students by the year 2000. The Council also released a model statute to show how states might guarantee quality educational services to children and a report on current state activities in this area, "Children At Risk: The Work of the States."

Since the release of these documents, the Council has initiated a series of efforts to implement its recommended educational guarantees for students at risk. The Council's efforts have included both an examination of proposals to restructure schools and an analysis of new research about the nature of learning.

At the Council's Annual Meeting in November 1989, CCSSO adopted a guiding statement, "Restructuring Schools: A Policy Statement of the Council of Chief State School Officers." At the same meeting the Council released two reports: "Success for All in A New Century: A Report by the Council of Chief State School Officers on Restructuring Education" and "Family Support, Education, and Involvement: A Guide for State Action."

School restructuring research and initiatives have focused on several educational variables, including school governance, the nature and organization of curriculum and instruction, new professional roles for educators, and accountability for student performance. The Council's Voices from Successful Schools project examined each of these factors in visits and interviews with school personnel around the country. The project had a unique role in the work of the Council. It informed our research on school restructuring with both data and opinions drawn directly from schools and school districts. We learned from school staff how each issue related to school restructuring and how improved educational outcomes for disadvantaged children had been addressed in their buildings.

Many people are responsible for the success of this project. First and foremost are the students and staff of the schools we visited.

At the Council of Chief State School Officers, the project was conceived and directed by Cynthia G. Brown, Director of the CCSSO Resource Center on Educational Equity. Ellen Bach provided day-to-day management and was primarily responsible for the final synthesis and analyses of individual school visit reports and for authorship of this monograph. She worked with detailed reports written by Resource Center on-site reviewers--Ellen Bach, Eileen Bergsman, Cynthia G. Brown, Barbara Gomez, Christopher Harris, Jane Kratovil, Julia Lara, Glenda Partee, Darlene Saunders, and Burton Taylor. Ann Samuel and Barbara West provided vital support to this effort.

Enthusiastic and crucial assistance was contributed by the chief state school officers and their staff in California, Connecticut, Florida, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Several state staff accompanied CCSSO Resource Center staff on the visits: Alicia Ramirez Brewer of California, Richard E. Lappert of Connecticut, Miriam Padreda of Florida, Dean Frost and Shelby Boudreaux of Louisiana, Carol Reed and Phyllis Sunshine of Maryland, Nancy Haas and Newnan Brown of Michigan, and Gary Ledebur of Pennsylvania.

Special thanks are given to Sharon Franz of the Academy for Educational Development, John Goodlad of the University of Washington, Asa Hilliard of Georgia State University, Scott Miller of the Exxon Education Foundation, and Robert Slavin of Johns Hopkins University who helped us design this project and provided guidance about what we might find in the schools we visited and how to interpret these findings.

Finally, we are deeply grateful to the Exxon Education Foundation and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation for providing the critical and timely financial assistance for this Council initiative for students at risk of school failure. The views expressed, however, are not necessarily those of these Foundations.

INTRODUCTION

American public school students must learn more to prepare for the 21st century. National studies and international comparisons have documented this observation repeatedly.

Many broadscale efforts have been undertaken at the state and local levels to raise achievement of all students beyond basic literacy and numeracy to improved levels of student comprehension, reasoning, and expression. The states have initiated many of these activities in concert with local districts and schools.

The Council of Chief State School Officers places special emphasis on the urgency of meeting the challenges of those young people placed at risk of not graduating from high school. We are deeply troubled that children benefit inequitably from our current educational system. As the National Assessment of Educational Progress has concluded,

> *It is clear that in America, children from some groups are less likely to become literate than are children from others. Black children, Hispanic children, children living in disadvantaged urban communities, and those whose parents have low levels of education are at particular risk for future educational failure. Further, once these children begin their schooling at a disadvantage, they are unlikely to catch up* (Applebee, et. al., p. 28).

The Council is also deeply concerned about that group of youngsters who are seriously underachieving even though they graduate from high school. These students are disproportionately minority and living in poverty.

In the report that follows, we discuss our exploration over 18 months of successful schools with large concentrations of at-risk students. We have concluded that successful schools have:

- dramatically improved and sustained student achievement with students demonstrating capacity to think, reason, and apply the knowledge they have gained; and

- a full distribution of high performance among all subgroups--minority, nonminority, those of children from low-income families, and those of children from families whose home language is not English.*

Too few schools demonstrate these characteristics. It is imperative to examine with care and specificity schools that are well down the road to success in reaching them and to convey the findings to others who will find guidance in them. We have tried to do this in our descriptive snapshots and analyses of the schools we visited.

The Council's work in discovering the keys to successful schools is only beginning. We intend to continue our search through review of new research findings and more on-site visits. This is the first in a series of reports we expect to make about what we have seen and heard, our conclusions to date, and initial recommendations.

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*With regard to this second goal, we are seeking for all groups of students, at a minimum, a range of performance similiar to that achieved by middle-income white students. Currently, poor children and most minority-group children tend to have a large proportion of low achievers, a limited proportion of average achievers, and very few high achievers. Unless a group has a distribution of achievement that approaches the distribution of the majority population, it will be difficult for that group to join the mainstream fully.

I. HOW WE DID THIS STUDY

The Voices from Successful Schools project included several activities, each designed to contribute to an exploration of how some schools positively affect the educational outcomes of disadvantaged students--the students on whom so many schools and teachers are tempted to give up. Many education, political, and business leaders repeatedly have declared that we do, in fact, know how to educate all children. The task is to muster the resources to bring this about. CCSSO staff members went to school staff members to find out how they had made this happen.

The Voices from Successful Schools project included three methods of investigation: review of recent research, consultation with academic experts, and on-site study of exemplary schools. The last of these was the centerpiece of our effort--a series of visits to 19 elementary and middle schools deemed successful by either researchers or state education agency staff. CCSSO Resource Center on Educational Equity staff members received training in conducting these site visits, and all staff members visited schools. The schools included:

California

Calvin Simmons Junior High School, Oakland
Garfield Elementary School, Stockton
Eastman Avenue Elementary School, Los Angeles

Connecticut

Silver Lane Elementary School, East Hartford

Florida

Charles Drew Elementary School, Dade County (Miami)
Olympia Heights Elementary School, Dade County (Miami)

Louisiana

Medard Hilaire Nelson ElementarySchool, New Orleans

Maryland

Columbia Park Elementary School, Prince George's County
Freetown Elementary School, Anne Arundel County
George G. Kelson Elementary School, Baltimore

Michigan

Academic Academy, Benton Harbor
Hutchins Middle School, Detroit

New York

Central Park East II Elementary School, New York City
Clara Barton Elementary School (P.S. #2), Rochester
Chester Dewey Elementary School (P.S. #14), Rochester

Pennsylvaina

Madison Elementary School, Pittsburgh
Verner Elementary School, Verona

Virginia

Francis Scott Key Elementary School, Arlington
Willard Model Elementary School, Norfolk

(In the Appendix are the school addresses, phone numbers, and names of the principals at the time of our visits.)

Our visits to schools were divided into two phases. First, Council staff visited schools in nearby states, including Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. During the second phase of the project, we chose states with schools recommended to us by school improvement experts. We requested additional recommendations of schools from the chief state school officers in those states. We limited the number of states so that we could visit more than one school per state to get a flavor for the varied roles a state education agency might play in school improvement efforts.

Schools were visited by a staff member from the CCSSO Resource Center along with a state education agency representative designated by the chief state school officer in each state. The site visit team spent one day in the school, speaking with the principal, teachers, other staff members, parents, and students. In most cases, the team also met for

a short time with the district superintendent or other district staff.

Site visit teams collected data about the student body, staff, and community of the school; innovative aspects of the school program; mechanisms for implementing improvements; staff roles and training; the involvement of parents, the school district, and outside organizations or agencies; school atmosphere; sources of funding; methods of determining success or failure of students and of the overall school program; and, when possible, standardized test score data.

A second aspect of this project was a review by Resource Center staff of research on successful school practices for disadvantaged children. This included John Goodlad's A Place Called School; working papers commissioned by the National Center on Education and the Economy; the work of the National Governors' Association on school restructuring; and articles by James Comer on the implementation of the "Comer Process" in New Haven public schools, by Reginald Clark on what minority students need in order to succeed in school, and by Rex Brown of the Education Commission of the States about teaching higher order thinking skills.

The Voices from Successful Schools project was also enhanced by workshop sessions between Council staff and experts on school improvement. These included:

John Goodlad, Professor and Director, Center for Educational Renewal, University of Washington;

Asa Hilliard, Fuller E. Callaway Professor, Department of Educational Foundations, College of Education, Georgia State University;

Robert Slavin, Director of the Elementary School Program, Center on Elementary and Middle Schools, The Johns Hopkins University.

Our goal was to find successful school practices for children at risk, and we defined successful schools according to the guarantees proposed by CCSSO in its 1987 policy statement. These guarantees are:

- An education program of the quality available to students who attend school with high rates of secondary school graduates. The program should be supplemented by education services that are integrated with the regular program and are necessary for the student to make progress toward high school graduation and to graduate.

- Enrollment in a school which demonstrates substantial and sustained student progress which leads at least to graduation from high school.

- Enrollment in a school with an appropriately certified staff which has continuous professional development.

- Enrollment in a school with systematically designed and delivered instruction of demonstrable effectiveness, and with adequate and up-to-date learning technologies and materials of proven value.

- Enrollment in a school with safe and functional facilities.

- A parent and early childhood development program beginning ideally for children by age three, but no later than age four.

- A written guide for teaching and learning for each student, prepared with and approved by the student and parents, which maps the path to high school graduation.

- A program for participation of families as partners in learning at home and at school as their children proceed toward high school graduation.

- Effective supporting health and social services to overcome conditions which put the student at risk of failing to graduate from high school.

- Education information about students, schools, school districts, and the states to enable identification of students at risk and to report on school conditions and performance. The information must be sufficient to let one know whether the above guarantees are being met and to provide a basis for local and state policies to improve student and school performance.

- Procedures by which students and parents or their representatives can be assured these guarantees are met.

Not all schools exhibited every one of these traits of the "successful school." However, the guarantees were our benchmark of what to look for in high-

achieving schools. In most cases schools were working toward these goals if they had not yet achieved them.

It is important to note that most of the schools we studied had not always provided highly effective educational services. They had worked their way up to their current standards of performance, and we were anxious to learn about this path to improvement. Our goal was to convey to chief state school officers and their staff information about how schools improve and to encourage state support for local school improvement efforts.

The body of the report begins with an examination of how and why schools identified the need to change. Who called upon a school to improve its services? What kinds of evaluations served as the basis for this decision? What conditions in a school reflected a need for improvement?

The report then examines how schools actually changed. It discusses specific types of strategies and arenas for improvement, including school management, instructional strategies, student assessment, staff training, parent involvement, strategies for early intervention, and the reorganization of categorical programs.

In the final section, we take a closer look at how states assisted local school improvement efforts. From these observations, we developed recommendations for chief state school officers and state education agency staff members about avenues they might pursue in an effort to instigate or support local school improvement.

A. OUR IDIOSYNCRATIC CHOICE OF SCHOOLS

We began our research with the assumption that, as Asa Hilliard told us, virtually every community contains an excellent school. Our challenge was to find excellent schools in urban communities which enrolled high percentages of children from low-income families and to learn about how other schools might achieve this degree of success. In order to find schools, we requested recommendations from school improvement experts and from chief state school officers.

The experts we spoke with, such as John Goodlad and Hilliard, told us many schools were implementing effective programs without significant intervention from other agencies. As Hilliard put it, these were not "magical" schools. They were simply schools where administrators and faculty were committed to educating children and worked together to achieve this goal. We hoped the staff of such schools would help us determine how other schools could become equally successful without inordinate support from the district or state.

We also expected to find school staff members who, from their own experience, could help us hypothesize ways in which states could support school improvement efforts. We hoped, additionally, to find schools that had received such assistance from a state education agency or local school district and could serve as models of state/district/school collaboration to improve services for disadvantaged children.

Contrary to our expectations, most of the schools we visited had received a significant amount of outside assistance. This probably was due, at least in part, to the fact that they had interacted more extensively with outside agencies, were better known and, therefore, had been recommended to us. Virtually all the schools we visited had been identified by either state education agency staff members or experts on local school improvement. They tended to know about a school because it had implemented a special program supported by the state education agency or developed by the academic expert. Thus, the school had been receiving assistance from outside the "normal" sources of support. In the cases where this was not true, the schools were either identified for us by district level staff or through the recommendation of an academic or policy expert who had "discovered" them.

The schools we chose to visit did not each meet a full set of rigorous, objective evaluation criteria. Although we examined factors such as test scores and attendance in developing our list of schools, we did not discard schools simply because they failed to meet a specific level of success according to these measurements. Our identification and choice of schools were somewhat idiosyncratic and impressionistic, largely because in the first phase of visits we wanted to see various "kinds" of schools and programs (e.g., school-based management, bilingual education, early childhood education). Therefore, our criteria could not be overly specific or restrictive.

We did visit schools where student performance had been increasing, and many were the best in their districts. Very few schools, perhaps only one, however, had students who were achieving at the full range of levels--including the degree of excellence generally found only in suburban schools. In many of the schools with improved student achievement, the lowest performing students had made remarkable progress, but the very best students remained far behind the top students in other school districts. This was a great disappointment.

Another factor in our choice of schools was our discovery that definitions of "success" varied among schools and related agencies. In many cases, state education agencies and other experts recommended schools that only recently had begun to implement changes and show signs of improvement. An important lesson of our visits was that for many in the field of education, these signs of improvement are equated with success. We believe that innovative programs alone are not enough to merit the label "successful school." However, in some cases we did visit these schools, and our findings about them are included in this report. Thus, our insights about schools successfully educating disadvantaged students were in some instances a result of comparing them with schools still working hard to improve.

B. DEMOGRAPHICS AND STUDENT MOBILITY

The demographics of a school's student body weighed very heavily in our choice of schools to visit. We were anxious to learn about schools which were providing excellent educational services to low-income students, primarily in urban areas. Every school we visited had a high percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch, a measure of low-income or poverty; in most cases, this was true for the vast majority of students in a school. All but two of the schools we visited had a majority minority student body. Most schools enrolled primarily black students; two were mostly Hispanic. The schools varied in size from approximately 200 to more than 600 students.

A great concern of staff in many schools was the degree of mobility their students experienced. Teachers most frequently mentioned this problem, citing the number of students that entered and left their class over the course of one year. For example, it was not unusual for a teacher to have put 54 student names on the class roster by Christmas--in a class that never exceeded 32 students at one time. Teachers universally complained that the lack of continuity had a severely negative effect on students' learning.

The degree of student mobility at some of the schools we visited was truly astounding. In one year, Clara Barton Elementary School in Rochester, New York gained 266 students and lost 255 students. This was out of a total school enrollment of 685 students. A school in Prince George's County, Maryland had a student mobility rate of more than 60%. In many cities we visited, families moved frequently because their housing became unaffordable. School officials told us that students often transferred within one school district and ultimately returned to their original school, at least for a time.

John Goodlad told us that student mobility was closely correlated to student failure. If a child moves twice in one year, the likelihood of school failure is extraordinarily high, even if other negative factors such as poverty are absent. School staffs recognized this fact and had sought numerous ways of reducing the consequences of a factor they could not control. One school district decided to use the same textbooks in every school so that students would have continuity in their learning materials. Teachers in Stockton, California wanted to adopt a plan by which students, throughout their schooling, would be bused to the school in which they had originally enrolled. This option was an extremely expensive one, however, and there seemed little likelihood it would be implemented. The Benton Harbor, Michigan school district established the Academic Academy, which enrolled children in grades 1 to 3 who already had experienced school failure. These children were bused to the school from throughout the district, and their school attendance and performance, therefore, were not as strongly affected by family mobility.

The problems resulting from high rates of student mobility were mentioned by countless numbers of school officials, and few had found satisfactory solutions. Some school districts are working to improve their systems for collecting and maintaining data on students so they can more effectively transfer pertinent information to the various schools at which the students enroll.

Nonetheless, there is no research that indicates how to get a full distribution of performance for students who move frequently or for student bodies of schools that have high mobility rates. In many cities, educators report average student turnover rates in the 30-50% per year range. There is an urgent need for research and policy analysis to address this challenge if the goal of educational success for all children is to be reached.

II. INITIATION: WHY AND HOW SCHOOLS BEGAN TO CHANGE

A. IMPETUS FOR CHANGE: WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

There was no single type of person or organization acting as the primary agent of change in the majority of schools we visited. In virtually every instance, the successful implementation of change required participation by many persons, including those both within and outside the school. Although a combination of school-based and extra-school resources was usually necessary to implement change, there was no "magic mix" required to achieve success. These combinations varied from school to school.

In some cases, the impetus for improvement came from within the school, often through a new principal. Under the leadership of a new and energetic leader, the school staff began working to improve the school, and as part of their efforts, they sought assistance from the district, from parents, from community-based organizations, from social services agencies and from other groups that could somehow support the school's efforts with children. Thus, in most instances where change was generated from within the school building, some outside assistance was solicited and provided in response to this activity.

For example, a new principal at Madison Elementary School in Pittsburgh seemed to light a fire in the faculty. Her primary tool was inservice teacher training, and she performed much of the training herself. The principal and staff worked together with existing school resources to improve teaching and other services and to build motivation and involvement among children and parents. Madison was not targeted for special support from the district. However, it is important to note that the Pittsburgh school system is attempting systemwide reforms in the education of at-risk children and has an especially strong capacity for providing teacher training. The principal at Madison took full advantage of this resource.

Columbia Park Elementary School in Prince George's County, Maryland provides another example of improvements initiated by a new principal and enhanced by district resources. Very early in her tenure, the new principal of Columbia Park Elementary decided to implement the "Comer Process" of school planning and management, which she had learned about at a district-sponsored presentation by Dr. James Comer of Yale University. Staff and parents at other schools in the district were receiving training in the Comer Process, and although Columbia Park Elementary School was not officially designated eligible to participate in this training, the principal and a few staff and parents were able to take part. One year into implementation of this model, the district provided additional funds and other support because of the school's status as a nondesegregated school (it was impossible to desegregate the school due to geographic limitations). The principal at Columbia Park told us that these additional resources made it easier to implement the Comer Model, but the success of the model was by no means dependent upon additional resources.

It is important to note also that some of the improvement in the program at Columbia Park Elementary School seemed directly attributable to innovations implemented at the district level by a new superintendent of schools. Schools in Prince George's County had recently been required, by the district, to implement tenets of the Effective Schools research. Thus, improvements were taking place on many fronts and through the initiative of both the principal and superintendent. The principal commented that strong leadership from the superintendent had been helpful to her in implementing new programs, and a representative from the central office repeatedly attributed the improvement in student performance at Columbia Park Elementary to the leadership of the principal.

In the above cases and many others, we found that a talented principal was able to prompt improvements in a school and to tap into resources from outside sources. These principals were generally effective motivators and were highly regarded by school faculty. The advent of a new principal was frequently seen by teachers as being at the root of change in a school. However, a new and effective principal was not the only catalyst for change in the schools we visited.

In a number of other cases, opportunity to participate in an improvement program was offered to the school by an outside agent such as the school district, state education agency, or community organization. This opportunity acted as an incentive to the school's administration and staff to work toward improvements. Although the impetus for change in these cases came from outside the school, the outside agent was never, ultimately, the primary source of change. The key to success in these examples

was the ability and willingness of school administration and faculty to use the additional resources provided from outside the school to initiate and support fundamental changes in the school. We did not find schools in which fundamental change could be attributed to any agent other than school staff members. Outside organizations effectively served as impetus for improvement, but not as the chief implementers of change.

We visited one school which served as an example of a failed attempt to implement sustained improvements. At this school, an outside community organization played the primary role in both initiating and implementing improvement efforts. The program was directed by staff from the outside organization, and its most important component was a summer reading program. Only some of the regular school-year teachers taught in the summer program, and only a portion of the school's student body was enrolled. Events in this school suggested that the lack of a stronger involvement by school staff and the superficial nature of changes implemented in the regular school program resulted in a failure to make lasting improvements. The school staff was enthusiastic about the program, believing that teaching had improved and that the program generally was of great benefit to students. However, despite this staff support and positive outcomes for students, there was evidence that when the community organization withdrew its help, the innovative aspects of the program ceased to be part of the school's instructional program.

The concern about the lack of the program's lasting effect was expressed by several staff members. Factors contributing to the concern include: insufficient length of intervention by the community organization (three years); limitations imposed on instructional improvements by state regulations; the narrow focus on reading instruction when students needed access to a broad array of academic and nonacademic services; and the principal's lack of power and unwillingness to share control of the school's management with teachers and staff. Another factor contributing to the short life-span of improvements in this school may have been that the intervention came from an agency outside the school system or state government. That is, assistance was not provided by an agency "married" to the school by law or custom, so the relationship was not permanent. In fact, district staff were unfamiliar with the program.

Clara Barton Elementary School in Rochester, New York offers an illustration of a very different set of events, in which some of the impetus for change came from outside the school, but credit for improvements is very clearly due to the school staff. Clara Barton Elementary was identified as a low-performing school by the New York Education Department. Although the school staff say improvements in the school already had begun because of effective team work among faculty and administrators, the identification likely added impetus to efforts toward improvement. Once the need was recognized, virtually all the successes achieved by the school in its services for disadvantaged children were initiated and provided through the school's regular resources without additional support from the district or state.

An alliance among Silver Lane Elementary School in East Hartford, Connecticut, the East Hartford school system, and the Connecticut Department of Education provides an example of perhaps the most complex and comprehensive school improvement partnership we saw. All three players had a hand in instigating change at Silver Lane Elementary, and all three agencies continue to contribute to its present success and ongoing improvement. Six years ago, the principal of Silver Lane Elementary School in East Hartford, Connecticut, attended a presentation by the state education agency on implementing the tenets of the Effective Schools research developed by Ron Edmonds, Larry Lezotte, and others. After the presentation, the district superintendent invited any interested principals to approach him about implementing the process at their schools. Silver Lane's principal immediately indicated to the superintendent his interest in the state's program. Since that time, the school, the district, and the state have worked hand in hand to improve educational and related services at Silver Lane Elementary, which is now nationally known as an "effective school."

Thus, the pattern among the successful schools we visited was a combination of school-based and extra-school contributions to improvement efforts. However, within this pattern, there were tremendous variations from school to school, with each situation involving a different degree of outside intervention. We found that although an outside agent could provide the impetus for school improvement--and this was frequently the case--the most important players in school improvement efforts were the school administration and faculty. Or as one observer noted, virtually anyone could pull the trigger at the starting gate, but only the school staff could successfully run the race. For this reason, many school improvement plans called for staff training and team-building as one of the very earliest steps toward success.

Finally, we must qualify our comments about effective methods for instigating change in schools by admitting that although it is relatively easy to examine how improvements were initiated, it is very difficult to determine whether the change initiated will ultimately result in substantial improvement. Few

schools--and not all of those we visited--have completely implemented new efforts to improve their school program, and even fewer of these have evaluated the results of their efforts. The schools we visited had each experimented with new methods of providing quality education. Some had begun implementing fundamental changes in management or instruction a number of years ago and their improvements were well-established. Others were only in the early stages of making improvements. Therefore, although we were able to compare the methods by which schools initiated change, we could rarely make final judgments about the relative success of their efforts.

B. ASSESSING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE: HOW DID SCHOOLS KNOW THEY NEEDED TO IMPROVE?

Tied very closely to the issue of how schools got started on the road to improvement are questions about how school staff realized performance was inadequate and in what specific areas improvement was needed. We found that school principals, teachers, state education agency representatives, and district superintendents across the country referred to the same basic criteria in describing the poor performance of their schools prior to implementing improvements: low student test scores, poor attendance (although this is a less dramatic problem in elementary schools than in the higher grades), high suspension rates, and a negative school atmosphere experienced by students, teachers, and parents.

In most cases, school personnel were aware that improvement was needed. Nearly every school had owned up to the fact that children were not learning and changes needed to be made; very few schools waited for an outside agent to identify this for them. However, a number of school principals told us there had been problems with teachers who believed low-income, minority children from single-parent homes simply did not have the same capacity for learning as other children. Thus, acknowledging a school's poor performance was only the first step. Faculty also had to recognize the possibility of increasing student success.

Schools undertook a second and more formal level of evaluation to determine what specific improvements should be made and how they should be implemented. This evaluation tended to be very complex, and it varied from school to school. In many schools, the recognition that improvements were needed motivated the institution of school-based management. Then, the school's management team completed the second stage of the evaluation on behalf of the full school community.

For example, at Columbia Park Elementary School, a new principal found the school in disarray. There had been a tremendous amount of turnover, and nearly every member of the school faculty would be new at the beginning of the principal's first school year. The principal herself was filling her first assignment in that role. She had heard a presentation about James Comer's model of school-based planning and management and decided to implement the model at Columbia Park Elementary School. Thus, the new principal largely was responsible for completing a preliminary, informal evaluation of the school and for taking the first steps toward improvement.

Columbia Park Elementary established a School Planning and Management Team at the beginning of the school year. With the establishment of this team, which consisted of faculty members and parents, the principal gave up sole authority for decisionmaking about the school. That authority was shared by all members of the team, and the team evaluated school performance and set appropriate goals based on student test scores, attendance levels, and other data and indicators of success or failure. In this way, a system was established to ensure that a detailed and ongoing assessment is completed by members of the school community and used as the basis for planning.

A few schools, upon recognizing inadequacy in their performance, chose to participate in an assessment and improvement process sponsored by an outside group such as the state education agency. It is important to note that in the most successful of these instances, the school staff invited the intervention from the state or other supportive organization. In these cases, the comprehensive school assessment was done by state education agency staff members through questionnaires and interviews with school staff members. This type of assessment had the advantage of involving a large majority of the school community in the process of evaluating the school since opinions were solicited from virtually all staff, from parents, and from some students. However, school staff members and parents were more passive participants in this type of assessment process, especially in cases where the state education agency staff members not only collected but interpreted the information. Although in these cases assessment was completed by an outside agency, a school management team was eventually formed and charged with developing, or at least implementing, the improvements that grew from information collected about the school's performance.

For example, at the invitation of the Stockton Unified School District, the California Department of Education sponsored a detailed assessment of Garfield Elementary School provided by an outside consulting firm. The firm interviewed virtually all members of the school community, performed a computer analysis of this information, and provided "objective" data on the assets and needs of the school. This analysis also ranked the deficiencies found in the school program from least to most severe. A school management team was formed to implement changes according to the outcomes of this analysis. State education agency staff members told us the objective nature of the computer analysis made it easier for school staff to "buy into" the set of priorities established. However, although this was somewhat true at Garfield Elementary School, teachers at another California school using this process of assessment complained that school staff had no meaningful role in the process.

In the area of assessing a school's strengths and weaknesses, outside organizations could again provide useful assistance. An important key to success for this assistance is that it avoid being overly prescriptive.

III. HOW DID SCHOOLS IMPROVE?

The following is a discussion of arenas of and strategies for improvement undertaken by the schools we visited. This second section begins with the two most crucial areas of school activity: management and instruction (not necessarily in order of importance). These are followed by discussions of somewhat narrower areas of school activity, including early intervention, parent involvement, categorical programs, student assessment, staff training, and community support.

A. MANAGEMENT

1. School-Based Management Teams

Most of the schools we visited had implemented some form of school-based management. Among the 14 schools with a schoolwide reform (rather than efforts on special education, bilingual education, or early childhood programs not offered on a schoolwide basis), 10 schools had instituted management teams or committees within the school.

There are myriad definitions and models of school-based management. Generally, this term is used to describe a school management system in which decisionmaking is shared by multiple members of the administration and faculty (and sometimes parents), and a substantial amount of authority for decisionmaking is shifted from a local education agency to the school site. The areas of authority, such as finances, curriculum, training, and hiring, vary among sites and models.

a. Team Composition

We found more similarities than differences among the management teams in terms of their purpose, membership, and power. In many cases, the principal initially appointed the team. Each team included both teachers and administrators. Two teams also included parents, and in some districts we visited, students sat on management teams at the high school level (we did not visit high schools). Teams met on a monthly or bimonthly basis.

b. Issues Addressed (Jurisdiction)

Most management teams addressed a wide range of topics, including school climate, parent involvement, funding and use of resources, staff hiring, overall and individual student progress, specific school activities and curricular and instructional issues. In some cases, teams jumped right into the most difficult issues. In others, teams first cut their teeth on planning specific events for the schools. Where school teams spent little time on issues of instruction, the staff explained to us that the team was new and still completing basic tasks, such as developing a school philosophy. Schools with long-standing teams corroborated this explanation, saying that as initial problems were resolved, their team spent an increased amount of time on instructional issues.

An example of this pattern is Columbia Park Elementary School, which instituted its School Planning and Management Team in 1985. Its initial work was primarily to improve school climate and parent involvement, and it was very successful in these areas. The team recently has focused on the need to improve student performance in reading comprehension, which is the one area which has not significantly improved on student test scores. The management team developed a strategy that includes pre-testing students on specific objectives of a reading unit so they do not repeat material they already have mastered, and planning for new reading curriculum in the next school year. The current reading program emphasizes reading skills more than reading comprehension.

At Charles Drew Elementary School in Dade County, Florida, the management team, or Central Committee, was formed in 1987. It meets once a month and includes the principal, assistant principal, members of the steering committee elected by each grade group, the union steward, and the PTA president. In 1988, its second year of operation, the Personnel Committee of the Central Committee participated in the hiring of a new assistant principal. Through the Instructional Committee teachers selected all materials they felt would upgrade the curriculum. An assistant principal at Drew noted that the major factor making Drew unique is the strong teacher voice in the school on many issues, ranging from curriculum and materials to school policy.

Resource Center staff found several examples of leadership or management teams initiating fundraising activities for the benefit of a school. In most cases, fundraising was done on a relatively modest level, and the teams' financial responsibilities therefore were limited. At a meeting of the Drew Central Committee observed by a CCSSO site visitor, members discussed how to involve all students in the annual science fair and whether to raise money for a performance and display by one of the local Native American tribes. The team decided that $325 was

needed to fund the performance and felt confident this could be raised easily.

Only a few of the school management teams we learned about had major responsibility for financial issues. In Dade County, the 32 schools participating in the School-Based Management/Shared Decision-making program are using a "School-Based Budget System" developed as a cost neutral system. It produces no new funds but provides schools the opportunity to develop their own dollar-based, rather than unit-based, budgets. Schools have discretionary decisionmaking in 80 to 90 percent of the budget.

c. Setting Priorities

Virtually every management team was responsible for setting school priorities, sometimes with the involvement of outside people, such as parents. In most cases where there was no intervention from the state education agency, the school's priorities were based upon test scores and other objective data, as well as the teams' somewhat informal assessment of students' needs. In these cases, opinions by various school constituencies about areas needing improvement were represented by members of the team.

In two cases where there was major intervention from the state, state education agency staff members completed a detailed assessment of the school, ranging from student achievement to parent attitudes about the school. Each school's management team then developed priorities based upon the information collected. In these cases, all members of a school community, including teachers, administrators, students, and parents, contributed to the assessment.

The goals and priorities set by a school sometimes were very specific and applicable to several areas. Schools wanted to raise test scores by a certain percentage or improve attendance by a specific amount. In other schools, the team chose one broad objective to address, such as raising teacher expectations for students, and tackled this goal with different, but simultaneous strategies such as teacher training, improved student support services, and a teacher/student recognition program.

d. Making Decisions

There also were differences in how teams made decisions. In some models of school-based management, teams made decisions based on consensus. In others, issues were brought to a vote.

Columbia Park Elementary School in Prince George's County, Maryland, has implemented the Comer Model of the school planning and management team. In this model, decisions are based on team consensus, but the principal always retains the power to veto a team decision. According to Principal Patricia Green, the team plays an essential role in all decisions. However, to avoid a chaotic situation, the principal always has 51% control. It is the principal's task, she explained, to "steer the team toward a group decision."

In Rochester, New York, each school has a planning team composed of the principal as chair, teachers, and parents. The team makes decisions based upon a majority within each constituent group, so a group with greater numbers on the team cannot dominate decisions made by the team.

e. Development of School-Based Management

In some of the most well developed examples of school-based management, the school or district experienced a precursor to school-based management that helped prepare them for a more formal team management approach. For example, in Rochester, New York, district-sanctioned school-based planning teams only began in 1988, but they were not a new concept in the district. Rochester's Councils of Elementary School Teachers have existed for years, and most principals have worked with them. The experience with these Councils provided a basis for school-based management and joint governance, paving the way for shared governance before it became an issue of contract.

The process of instituting Rochester's school planning teams began in 1980 when the board of education identified "the school as the unit of improvement." In 1984, the school board considered a proposal to establish a formal program of planning school improvement in all Rochester schools. This proposal became the Management Model for Improved Performance, a systemwide effort that called for the development of school planning teams. Each team, together with the principal, would accept major responsibility for school assessment, program planning, evaluation, and implementation. Its objective was to raise student achievement through school-based planning. In 1988, school-based planning teams finally were instituted in every school in the district as a matter of teacher contract.

In addition to gradual development of a formal school-based management system, there were those schools in which the relationship between faculty and administration lent itself to shared control. At Charles Drew Elementary in Dade County, a teacher commented about the relationship between

the principal and teachers: "We have always had a very open relationship with Mr. Morley. He has always allowed us a voice in how to make the school a better place for the children and for us."

2. Successful Schools without School-Based Management

Central Park East II Elementary School (CPE II) in New York City has no school-based management team. A key factor affecting the style of management as well as other aspects of CPE II is the size of the school. CPE II enrolls fewer than 250 students. The school is one of a number of small alternative schools in Community School District #4 that are characterized by a small instructional setting, a strong parental involvement component, and a teaching staff that is creative, committed, and involved in the decisionmaking process of the school. CPE II is located in a large school facility which also houses another school. There is a building principal who handles purely management issues for the facility.

The goal of this management system is to allow the director of CPE II to give substantial leadership in instruction, as well as to perform necessary management duties. A number of years ago, Deborah Meier, the founding director of Central Park East Elementary, made the conscious decision to manage rather than teach. Initially, she also taught in an effort to reduce the student teacher ratio. Her rationale for leaving the classroom was that teachers would benefit more from her support of their instructional efforts than from the reduced class size made possible if the director also was a teacher. Teachers said they did not want the job of director, which is fraught with the hassles of negotiating with the district office and other agencies for resources needed by the school (Bensman, 1987).

Teachers are not involved in a formal management team and instead have the freedom to focus exclusively on instruction. They have a tremendous amount of decisionmaking power regarding curriculum and instruction at Central Park East II. The school director and teachers meet each week to discuss the curriculum and the needs of specific children.

There is also no management team at Madison Elementary School in Pittsburgh. The principal at Madison is a strong leader with high standards, and she demands hard work from Madison teachers. According to both the principal and teachers, it is known throughout the district that if you teach at Madison you probably work harder than your peers in other schools. However, Madison does have an Instructional Cabinet that meets once a month. The Instructional Cabinet is composed of representatives from each grade level and is responsible for outreach to other school staff and for implementing the decisions it makes regarding curriculum. Decisions are based on group consensus and the principal has veto power. The principal told us, "You don't plan for people but with people." One teacher said that the principal is effective because she "delegates and trusts."

3. School Relationship to District and State

In some schools we visited, a major factor in management was that the principal reported directly to a central administrator rather than negotiating with many departments at the central office or dealing with lower level central office managers about issues at the school. This direct line to top authority in the district office was valued highly by principals and seemed to offer opportunity for faster and productive change.

In Dade County, schools implementing School-Based Management/Shared Decisionmaking report directly to a liaison in the district superintendent's office. Schools also may request waivers from both local and state regulations that impair their ability to provide services to children. Thirty-two schools in Dade County have requested a total of 100 waivers; to date, all waivers have been granted. The deputy superintendent responsible for School-Based Management/Shared Decisionmaking in Dade County recommended to us that states arrange formal mechanisms by which schools can get temporary waivers from rules and regulations that "protect the status quo" and "prevent experimentation." He believes these waivers should be temporary and accompanied by accountability measures. By providing these waivers, he claims, a state education agency would create "an atmosphere for change and flexibility."

At Silver Lane Elementary in East Hartford, the principal and site leadership team report directly to the superintendent's office. Early in the process of establishing the team, the teachers requested that lights be installed outside the school to make it safer for them to attend evening meetings. The request was communicated directly from the principal to the superintendent, and there were lights outside Silver Lane Elementary School within days. Teachers told us that this access to decisionmakers and rapid response not only meant faster change but an increased sense of momentum and commitment to improvement on the part of school faculty and administration.

The only complaint we heard about such direct communication was a case where teachers did not trust the principal to adequately represent the needs identified by the management team. These teachers wanted direct communication between the management team and the district and state representatives. This problem seemed to be specific to a school with bad teacher/principal rapport.

B. INSTRUCTION

1. Instructional Strategies

In a number of schools, improvement revolve around issues of management and climate rather than instruction. Some theories of school improvement, notably the Comer Model implemented at Columbia Park Elementary School, are based on the belief that shared management and an improved climate in a school will provide the opportunity for--or even stimulate--better instruction. Although this is not expected in other experiments with school-based management, several schools visited with a focus on reorganizing management seem to share this view. Their first and major thrust is in the area of management, and although there is evidence of improvement in student performance, there has been no major change in teaching practices.

Columbia Park Elementary School is implementing tenets of both the Comer Model and the Effective Schools research and, therefore, is attending to both student self-esteem and student achievement in its efforts to improve performance. The School Planning and Management Team is responsible for directing improvements in both areas. Improvements in instruction stem primarily from teacher inservice training and from better alignment between children's performance and the instruction they receive. School faculty have improved their ability to tailor instruction to the specific needs of children, thereby increasing student learning time and speeding student progress through the curriculum.

The primary vehicle for ensuring student success at Central Park East II Elementary School (CPE II) is not new forms of management but alternative curriculum and methods of instruction. The CPE II staff is guided by a pedagogy that is child centered. Teachers say: "We believe that children learn best when they are actively involved" and "the teaching/learning of basic skills runs deeper than reading, writing, and math."

The instructional program at CPE II is the most "alternative" of any we visited and is providing outstanding education to disadvantaged children. Each year the teachers select an "integrated curricula theme," and the concepts of each content area are integrated around that theme. Each teacher researches and designs his/her own curriculum for the year, which results in a teaching staff that is intellectually stimulated and well-informed of trends and issues in education. For example, one third and fourth grade class looked at the world through the eyes of an artist as the framework for their study of math, science, and language arts. The beginning themes focused on shapes and patterns. Math and science concepts were integrated as students talked about patterning and balance and the relation of these concepts to equations and multiplication. Later in the year the children were introduced to multicultural themes as they talked about how different parts of the world view and create works of art within their unique cultural perspectives. Through this integrated curricula approach, the staff "covers" the requirements imposed by New York State and the city school district (skills, concepts, standards of performance).

At Madison Elementary School in Pittsburgh, the primary vehicle for improvement is teacher training and serious attention to meeting instructional objectives. Its philosophy is that all children can learn. One teacher told us that "the key to a successful classroom is really knowing the children as individuals." The same teacher said that the first two weeks of school are most important for establishing rapport--she has the children create "All About Me" books, and she makes one herself to share with the students.

Madison Elementary School participates in the Pittsburgh school district's Monitoring Achievement in Pittsburgh (MAP) instructional objectives program. The program, directed by a committee of teachers and administrators, identifies a list of 100 objectives for each unit of instruction. Teachers choose the 20 objectives they consider most important, and every nine weeks a MAP student test is used to evaluate their success in achieving these teaching objectives. Teachers must spend 60 percent of their time on the identified objectives; 40 percent of their time may be spent on remedial or enrichment activities. Results of tests of students' achievement are sent to the school, and these are used to change teachers' strategies when mastery of a skill is not gained or sustained. The principal monitors to see that 80 percent of the students have mastered the skills taught for that unit. With the MAP program, teachers are teaching to the objectives, but they also are encouraged to teach objectives not on the list of 20.

Clara Barton Elementary School in Rochester, New York, is another example of a school that has implemented both a new management system and a new approach to teaching and learning. All schools in

Rochester recently adopted a system of school-based management. In addition, Clara Barton Elementary has embraced a philosophy of "direct instruction" in which teachers provide intense small-group instruction. One teacher described this as "in their faces teaching." Resource teachers instruct children rather than teaching teachers how to teach. Direct instruction requires much personal attention to pupils; small student-teacher ratios; and a lot of planning each week among resource, regular teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, and student teachers. Classes are highly structured, both for academics and behavior. Because it is a large school, there are many classes and reading/math groups.

Medard Hilaire Nelson Elementary School in New Orleans, Louisiana, employs both new instructional strategies and a school management team to improve services to children. However, efforts on instruction seem to have been far more successful than those in sharing school management responsibilities. Nelson Elementary's program was initiated by a child advocacy group, the Southern Coalition for Educational Equity; its goal is to improve the reading comprehension skills of students in grades 4-6. A number of strategies have been used in the regular school program with a high degree of success, including reciprocal teaching, in which students play the role of the teacher in a group setting; recreational reading; journal writing; and having parents or a friend read to children for 15 minutes four times a week.

However, the most successful use of new instructional strategies at Nelson Elementary School occurs during its Summer Reading Program. Many of the same techniques, such as reciprocal teaching, are used in the summer program. The major difference is that during the summer they can be applied free of the constraints under which teachers operate during the regular year. For example, there are very specific state requirements as to the amount of time devoted to each subject. Many of those interviewed indicated a strong belief that the regular education program should be restructured to be more like the Summer Reading Program.

In schools in which improvement primarily depends upon a school management team, these teams have tended to implement discreet instructional programs, especially for reading, critical thinking skills, and skills measured by standardized tests. Silver Lane Elementary School has a number of special reading activities, including the Pizza Hut "Book It" program, the Super Readers Group, and "Superistic Readers." Olympia Heights Elementary School provides instruction in critical thinking skills for students above grade level in grades 2-3. There are no plans to expand this program to include all students.

2. Grouping and Retention

Research demonstrates both the lack of value and overuse of homogenous grouping and grade retention at all levels of schooling. In general, the schools we visited minimized the use of both. In most schools, we were told that students were grouped heterogeneously in order to allow then to learn from each other. In virtually every school where grouping was discussed, this was the case.

One notable exception to this was Madison Elementary School, where the principal said she believes heterogeneous grouping spreads teachers too thin, especially for reading. She admitted that children know who is in the high, middle, and low groups, but she believes she has solved this problem. All students in the same grade begin the year in the same textbook. For example, for second grade there are two classes: the slower class has 17 students and focuses on skills; the top group of 25 students does supplementary as well as skills work. The principal said that using the same book changes students' attitudes about their performance, and that by the third, fourth, and fifth grades she cannot tell much difference between the upper and lower reading groups.

The method of grouping used at Madison Elementary School, although different from most schools we visited, has been successful for its students. The school has only a small number of Chapter I students, few retentions, and test scores described by a representative of the Pennsylvania state education agency as "extremely high."

At Central Park East II, the issues of grouping are resolved somewhat by using a different grade structure altogether. Students spend two years each in first/second, third/fourth, and fifth/sixth grades. Because students represent a broad range of competencies, there is more opportunity to group within one class instead of retaining students who are falling behind. Teachers prefer the flexibility this system gives them because they can reinforce instruction in specific areas over the course of two years for students needing it. This grade structure also enhances continuity for both students and teachers.

The Academic Academy in Benton Harbor, Michigan, has developed a completely alternative method of dealing with grouping and retention issues for children in the earliest grades. The Academic Academy was established at the initiation of the new superintendent to help solve the district's problem of

nearly 30% annual retentions. The superintendent knew that such a high retention rate was likely to result in high rates of school dropouts in later years, and he took immediate steps to correct the situation. He requested the Board of Education to place a year-long moratorium on retentions throughout the district, and he established the Academic Academy for students in grades 1-3 who had been retained or were otherwise performing at very low levels.

The student population at the school consists of students between 6 and 10 years old; some older students have failed both kindergarten and first grade, and a few may have been retained in a grade twice. Seventy-one percent of Academic Academy students are boys.

Class size is 19-20 students; this small size is made possible by Chapter I funds. There are five paraprofessionals that work in the same two or three classrooms each day. Teachers received intensive training at the beginning of the school year focused on learning styles, and they vary their teaching techniques substantially during the course of the day.

Teachers at the Academic Academy told us that many of their students must simply have been behavior problems because they are now learning at normal rates. They said that in many cases, the students' former teachers would not recognize their current behavior and level of achievement. According to these standards, the school already has proven itself to be quite successful in just its first year. However, the district anticipates great difficulty assuring that these students receive equally excellent instruction when they leave the Academic Academy. The assistant superintendent told us that although some people preach, "pay now or pay later," the reality is that we have to "pay all along the way." She said that if no one is prepared to work with the Academic Academy students as they progress through school, they will fall back between the cracks.

The Academic Academy is an obviously controversial solution to a difficult problem. It has great advantages and disadvantages, but it certainly merits watching during the next few years as the district irons out many of the issues created by establishing the school.

3. State Mandates and Waivers

Teachers in one state complained that the sheer number of state-mandated instructional requirements restricted their ability to make meaningful improvements in instruction. Because teachers are required to spend specific amounts of time per day teaching each subject area, they are unable to restructure the delivery of instruction.

A similar complaint came from another school (in a different state) that had implemented an excellent alternative instructional program but was constantly having to struggle with testing requirements imposed by the local school system and curriculum prescribed by the state. The school faculty disagreed with the strict curriculum guidelines laid out by the state, but adhered to them somewhat so that students' test scores would not be drastically affected by an incompatibility between the school's instruction and the mandated standardized tests.

Both school and district level staff in various places discussed the possibility of states waiving rules and regulations that might limit the manner in which services can be provided. It was suggested to us that these waivers should be only temporary and should be accompanied by strict accountability measures. Several states are experimenting with such waivers and a few of the schools we visited had received them. Their reaction to these waivers was very positive.

C. EARLY INTERVENTION

Most of the elementary schools we visited dealt with problems created by the uneven preparation of students for school. They employed very different strategies to address this issue, amid confusion and debate about how limited funds for early intervention programs could be used most effectively.

1. Early Childhood Education and Care

Teachers of young children in many of the elementary schools commented that children who attended an early childhood program such as Head Start were significantly better prepared for school than those who did not. These teachers, without exception, were working with low-income children, and their comments closely match research indicating that children from disadvantaged homes benefit substantially from early childhood programs. The kindergarten teacher at Silver Lane Elementary School in East Hartford, Connecticut said that children's skills are much better if they come from a preschool or Head Start Program. She believes that without this preparation, it may take children two to three years to catch up.

Silver Lane Elementary does not offer an early childhood program. There are preschool programs in East Hartford funded through Chapter 1, special education, and Head Start. The preschool Chapter 1 programs used to be decentralized, but they now

all are located in one preschool center. The kindergarten teacher believes more preschool programs for children of the working poor are greatly needed. There are two private preschool centers near Silver Lane Elementary, but even with sliding-scale fees these are too expensive for many families.

The principal at Madison Elementary School also commented on the need for more preschool services. Next door to Madison Elementary School there is a day care program for three-year-olds and Head Start for four-year-olds, housed in portable buildings. The principal complained about the income guidelines. Families just above the income cutoff are sometimes those in which both parents are working. This means they cannot afford either to work or not to work: if a mother works, she must pay a huge fraction of her income in child care; if she stays home to care for the children, the family sacrifices half of its small income. The principal said the program would double in size if it had the space and altered the eligibility guidelines. At the time of our visit, for every six children in Pittsburgh eligible for preschool services, only one is served.

Charles Drew Elementary School in Dade County, Florida, has a Kindergarten Readiness Program (KRP) as one of its nine components of school improvement. The program is designed to give three- and four-year-olds a structured atmosphere, which "stresses cognitive and affective development through manipulative story-telling and exposure to the community." The children are kept very active and are given constant positive reinforcement. The "Cooperative Preschool Inventory" is administered as a pre and post test. According to the Assistant Principal, the students enrolled in last year's KRP tested out of the Chapter 1 kindergarten and are now in regular kindergarten.

Olympia Heights Elementary School in Dade County has a before- and after-school child care program in which 10% of the students participate.

Clara Barton Elementary School in Rochester does not provide an early childhood development program, but it has received foundation funds to link it with early childhood and day care centers in Rochester. Chester Dewey Elementary School, also a Rochester public school, began in November 1988 to implement a prekindergarten program for three- and four-year-olds. The program was in the earliest stages when we visited. This prekindergarten program is one component of the Community School Model being used at Chester Dewey, one of 14 schools in New York State implementing a plan for the school site to provide many services to families. Teachers at both Chester Dewey and Clara Barton Elementary Schools recommended that the state make early childhood programs a priority and provide funding for these programs.

The most comprehensive and fully implemented school-based early childhood program visited was at Freetown Elementary School in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. In fact, the focus of our visit to Freetown Elementary was the early childhood program known as the Extended Elementary Education Program (EEEP). The idea for the program was generated by the state superintendent of education, and the program was initiated by the state education agency. Freetown is one of five pilot sites in the state opened in 1980. The Freetown EEEP initially received 100% of its funding from the state; the county has now assumed 40% of the funding. Additional support comes from the PTA, the Anne Arundel Cultural Arts Fund, and Chapter 1.

According to the principal, there are several unique characteristics of the program: 1) it allows children the opportunity for positive contacts with adults outside of the family; 2) it stimulates four-year-olds' desire to learn; 3) it develops a positive school/home relationship; 4) it provides a lot of positive reinforcement for learning; and 5) it teaches children techniques for getting along with others and working out differences.

Parental involvement is a key component of the EEEP. There is an orientation for parents prior to a student's enrollment, and every student's home is visited at least once during the school year by the EEEP teacher. School-parent communication continues through three scheduled conferences every year, a monthly newsletter, and a monthly calendar for parents that lists the concepts to be taught every day as well as the daily snack.

At the EEEP's inception, a great deal of time was spent providing information to the Head Start program to prevent any possible turf problems. Both programs serve four-year-olds, but all children are eligible for the EEEP regardless of income. Also, Head Start can now serve three-year-olds, which the EEEP cannot do.

Initially, recruitment for the program was difficult, but the program is now easily filled. This year's program will include only 20 students (instead of the previous average of 45) because a school in a neighboring attendance area has initiated its own EEEP. This means that all children in the Freetown EEEP will remain in the school for the later grades, which pleases the staff.

2. Full-Day Kindergarten vs. Pre-First Grade

A great variety of opinion existed in the schools we visited about the relative merits of full-day kindergarten and pre-first grade. Some schools chose the former and others the latter; these decisions did not seem to be based on research which established that one or the other was more beneficial for children. Especially in the case of pre-first grade, school staff seemed to have chosen this option based on their own experiences with children. However, where we found pre-first grades, funding was lacking for full-day kindergartens for all children.

The schools offering full-day kindergarten seemed able to do so because of state funding. Silver Lane Elementary School in East Hartford has one full-day and two half-day kindergarten classes. The full-day kindergarten is one of 39 such programs funded by the state through a special grant program. The principal at Silver Lane said students are retained for a second year in kindergarten if necessary, but rarely after that. A number of other schools have similar policies on retention--they feel it is better to retain a child early in his or her schooling and to avoid retaining a student later on.

Chester Dewey Elementary School in Rochester offers full-day kindergarten as one of 14 state-funded "community schools" in New York State. There are two full-day kindergarten classes: Learning through English Academic Program (LEAP) for limited English proficient students and a regular class for native English speakers. The full-day kindergarten program emphasizes language development, and by the time children enter first grade they are accustomed to instructional language and are ready to learn to read. The only problem cited by staff was the lack of space for additional classes.

School staff at Clara Barton Elementary School, also in Rochester, noted that a full-day kindergarten program could greatly change the racial make-up of the school by attracting more white families. The increased number of white students could result in saving the magnet program at the school, which is in danger of losing funding due to a failure to fulfill racial quotas.

Pre-first grade was the other strategy used by some schools to intervene early in a child's schooling and prevent long-term school failure. These schools differentiate between retaining students and placing them in a "transitional" or "pre-first" grade. At Clara Barton Elementary School in Rochester, any child with "readiness deficits," which are identified through assessment and teacher recommendation, is enrolled in pre-first grade. There are two pre-first grade classes, with 15 children in one class and 17 in the other. The regular first grade class has 30 children. The principal at Clara Barton believes the pre-first grade would be unnecessary if the school could provide full-day kindergarten instead. The school is currently unable to provide full-day kindergarten because of space and funding barriers.

Madison Elementary School in Pittsburgh also has a pre-first grade program, called the Early Learning Skills (ELS) transition program, initiated in 1982 at the request of the school principal. She maintains that ELS gives children a "second chance" and that "many of the kids just needed that extra year." The program repeats kindergarten lessons at a faster pace, then introduces the early lessons of first grade at a slower pace. Students are allowed to go at their own pace in order to "feel good about school."

The criteria used to assign children to ELS include their scores on the Abbreviated Kindergarten Inventory Test and on the MAP reading test, a teacher evaluation of their emotional and social readiness, and the student's completion of kindergarten, including mastering a percentage of their sounds and letters. Of 57 students in kindergarten, approximately 10 will go into ELS. This year there are 16 students in ELS.

According to the principal, assignment to ELS is not irreversible. Some students "blossom after kindergarten" and can be moved into the regular first grade. If a child shows marked improvement by the first grading period of ELS, he or she can be reassigned. The principal noted that a strong parent component helps parents become aware of changes in their children. However, most students stay in ELS for a full year.

D. CATEGORICAL PROGRAMS

Council staff found schools dealing with federal and state categorical programs in widely divergent ways. Some had integrated these programs into their school improvement efforts and reorganized the provision of categorical services accordingly. Others had barely begun to address problems in these programs. CCSSO visiting teams were sometimes left with the impression that changes had not been initiated in categorical programs due to confusion about the regulations governing them.

1. Chapter 1

Schools we visited were experiencing two types of problems with the provision of Chapter 1 services. In some cases, they provided such exceptional instruc-

tional services that low-income children were losing their eligibility under Chapter 1 because they performed so well on standardized tests. Of course, reduced numbers of Chapter 1 eligible students meant loss of funds to schools. In other cases, schools felt bound to continue using pull-out Chapter 1 services even in schools where more than 75 percent of students were eligible. In our estimation, this was due to simple inertia, fueled by uncertainty about the regulations governing Chapter 1 and fear of violating them.

Some students in every school visited were eligible for Chapter 1 funds based on the concentration of children from low-income families. In most schools the vast majority of students met income guidelines for Chapter 1, but, as mentioned above, many did not receive services because of their high test scores. For example, at Madison Elementary School 80% of students receive free or reduced price lunches but only 15 students in the school are eligible for Chapter 1 services because the remainder have too high test scores.

The same is true at Silver Lane Elementary School, where 150 students receive free or reduced price lunches but only 25 receive Chapter 1 services. These 25 students attend daily half-hour, pull-out classes of three or four children. Instruction is provided by an intensive reading instructor.

The Chester Dewey Elementary School in Rochester reduced the number of children assigned to special education classes by providing students, instead, with Chapter 1 services. Its new dilemma is that as student test scores improve, the school may lose its Chapter 1 funding.

At Charles Drew Elementary School in Dade County, there are 107 Chapter 1 students out of a total school enrollment of 640. (Eighty-five percent of students live below the poverty level and are therefore eligible, according to income guidelines, for Chapter 1 services.) Thirty-seven students receive services under the state's compensatory education program. School staff said that fewer and fewer children at Drew are eligible for Chapter 1 services because of improved test scores. As a result, the school has been trying to serve more children under the state program.

Most schools still provide Chapter 1 services as pull-out classes, yet sometimes these classes have as many as 15 students. Staff at Drew Elementary School considered their compensatory education classes to be quite small, even with about 15 students. Computers and aides are used to assist instruction. In addition to reading instruction, the Chapter 1 curriculum at Drew includes daily Spanish instruction and a new emphasis on oral language development and science. This additional instruction raised questions about the amount of time students spend each day in these pull-out classes.

In contrast, at Clara Barton Elementary School Chapter 1 services have been delivered in the regular classroom for the past two years. Chapter 1 resources and efforts are focused on children in grades one to three because of evidence indicating that early support is most effective. The Chapter 1 instructional team works with the regular teachers, providing services to the whole class while targeting specific students for extra help.

2. Special Education

Nearly every school we visited was grappling with problems created by a history of assigning too many students to special education classes, especially male minority children. The two schools that had implemented successful programs to improve special education services had reduced the number of children assigned to special education classes and increased the amount of support available in the regular classroom. Even those schools with less focused efforts measured the success of attempted improvements by how many children previously assigned to special education classes had been mainstreamed. This movement to mainstream students currently assigned to special education was much stronger and more common than efforts to provide Chapter 1 services in the regular classroom.

a. Hutchins Middle School

Two schools had implemented distinctly alternative methods of addressing problems in special education. The Detroit Public Schools have developed a program called Alternatives to Special Education, which received a three-year grant of $45,000 from the Michigan Department of Education. Detroit's efforts were recommended to us by Asa Hilliard as a method of truly revolutionizing the provision of special education services. The overall purpose of the program, according to its grant description, is to improve services for disabled children and "to increase their opportunities to remain within the regular education classroom setting." The Detroit Public Schools use a "Resource Model" designed to convert three categorical self-contained classrooms to a resource program where students return to regular education and receive specialized support from the resource staff. This program has been implemented only in middle schools because misclassification is no longer common in Detroit at the elementary school level. This situation seems to be unique to the Detroit school system.

The resource model also provides consultation and assistance for regular education students identified as low-performing, high-risk students subject to the special education referral track. Resource teachers, who are trained special educators, work with regular education teachers, often in their classrooms, to provide special supportive instruction and/or consultation.

The two components of Detroit's program are Dynamic Assessment (D.A.) and Instrumental Enrichment (I.E.). Ingrid Draper, director of special education for the Detroit Public Schools, said that "D.A./I.E. is not only a pedagogy, but a philosophy to help us with our reform goals. It is one of the few, if not only, processes that integrates effective schools research in so many areas."

Dynamic Assessment takes eight or nine hours over several days to administer and is highly dependent upon the interaction between examiner and child. The assessor works to change any deficiency during the assessment process. Ingrid Draper noted that Dynamic Assessment "comes closest to fulfilling our goal that assessment serve the learner and the teacher and that assessment aid in selecting and designing effective programs for all children. However, D.A. should not be used as a replacement for other kinds of testing."

Instrumental Enrichment consists of 15 paper and pencil exercises, called instruments because they are said to be "instrumental" in overcoming one or more cognitive deficiencies. Instrumental Enrichment is used two or three times a week for a three-year period with individuals or groups of students, ages 10-18 years. Students are taught to solve problems. The teacher also structures "bridging" activities that help students apply what they have learned to both school work and real life. Students become very knowledgeable about how they learn and can use that knowledge in many situations.

There is a strong relationship between Dynamic Assessment and Instrumental Enrichment. Dynamic Assessment determines how a student learns, provides information about a student's learning potential, and modifies a student's cognitive deficiencies. Instrumental Enrichment continues to assist the student in overcoming those cognitive deficiencies. It is important to note, however, that Dynamic Assessment and Instrumental Enrichment do not have to operate in tandem.

The Alternatives to Special Education program received rave reviews from teachers, district and school administrators, and parents. However, we learned that despite the success of this program, the school psychologist must continue to do traditional assessments in order to meet the requirements for state and federal categorical funding. Without these assessments, Hutchins Middle School and other schools in Detroit would lose their state and federal funding for special education. The psychologist uses Dynamic Assessment with students "on the side" because there is no funding for it.

b. Verner Elementary School--The Adaptive Learning Environments Model (ALEM)

The second school we visited that was trying systematically to improve services to students with special needs was Verner Elementary School outside of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Verner Elementary was not officially part of our project on successful schools, but a Council staff person was invited to visit the school as a demonstration of the use of the Adaptive Learning Environments Model (ALEM), designed by Margaret Wang of the Temple University Center for Research in Human Development and Education.

ALEM addresses individual learning needs by providing a large proportion of individualized instruction during the school day, especially in basic skills. At Verner Elementary School, children spend the morning studying math, reading, and writing. They work on their own or in small groups, and teachers employ various strategies, such as cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and computer-assisted instruction. Students primarily have prescribed activities in basic skills areas but are allowed a specified number of "exploratories" each week in which they choose their own learning activity.

Because of the high degree of individualized instruction, children are able to work at their own pace. Thus, students assigned to special education participate in the regular classroom but complete learning activities appropriate to their needs. Special education teachers work with students in the regular classroom setting. A few students with severe needs remain in a self-contained resource room.

Both regular and special education students are evaluated on a regular basis using criterion-referenced assessments. The information gathered fulfills the formal individual education programs (IEPs) of the special education students, and also is an important tool in providing individualized instruction for regular education students.

As part of the ALEM method, students are taught to manage their learning and behavior in the classroom through "self-scheduling." Students at Verner Elementary "self-schedule" for most of the morning, selecting from the activities and tasks prescribed for them in the areas of reading, writing and math, and working at their own pace. The teacher moves

among the students to provide help and monitor their progress.

During the afternoons at Verner Elementary, children participate in a more traditional classroom environment because the faculty believes they must also know how to function in the standard classroom setting. Social studies and science are the principal subjects taught in the afternoon.

Verner Elementary provides Chapter 1 services in pull-out sessions during the time when students are self-scheduling. In this way, no student misses direct instruction. Once the Chapter 1 teacher has provided the requisite amount of instruction for each child eligible for these services, he or she provides additional instructional support in regular classrooms to both Chapter 1 and regular education students, although the focus is on students identified for Chapter 1 services.

The principal at Verner commented that if Chapter 1 regulations permitted in-class instruction to the degree it is allowed by the Education of the Handicapped Act, the school could provide all Chapter 1 services in the regular classroom. (Verner does not have a high percentage of low-income and low-performing students and, therefore, is not eligible for a schoolwide Chapter 1 program.)

Both Margaret Wang's ALEM and the Detroit Public School's Alternatives to Special Education offer methods of serving children with special needs in the regular classroom. Parents at both schools were very enthusiastic about the success of teachers with their children in the regular classroom. In addition to the high quality service provided for special education students, these two programs offer methods of serving other children with special needs, such as compensatory education. Staff in the Detroit Office of Special Education view the assessment and instructional methods used in D.A. and I.E. as having great potential for use in Chapter I and other compensatory education programs. ALEM is currently being used to advantage in the scheduling of Chapter 1 services at Verner Elementary. It also is being implemented in the Philadelphia school system where there is a higher percentage of low-income minority students, to benefit both special education and Chapter 1 students.

3. Bilingual Education

Council staff studied two elementary schools specifically for their bilingual education programs. Eastman Avenue Elementary School in Los Angeles and Francis Scott Key Elementary School in Arlington, Virginia are in districts with high percentages of limited English proficient (LEP) and language minority students. However, the number of LEP students is much greater at Eastman and this affected the school's design of a bilingual program. Eastman's school population is nearly 100% Hispanic, and a relatively small percentage of the student body is fully English proficient. Thirty-nine percent of the student body at the Key School is limited English proficient, although that number will increase in coming years because most of the school's LEP students are first and second graders and an increasing number of LEP students are expected to enter the school system in coming years.

The two schools' programs are very different in content and method, as well as in their origins. However, both offer an alternative to bilingual ESL programs. The programs illustrate how to initiate and implement bilingual programs in the face of such issues as a shortage of qualified teachers, problems with student grouping, student assessment, and others.

a. Eastman Avenue Elementary School

Eastman Avenue Elementary School was one of the original sites for what has come to be known as the Eastman Curriculum Design Project. The school was invited in 1980 by the California state education agency to be one of five schools implementing a curriculum designed by the agency based on its synthesis of research on bilingual education. Schools were chosen based on the number of LEP students enrolled, among other criteria.

At the time the principal was in her first year of the job and initially declined to implement the project. However, during her first year she realized there was a great deal of "confusion felt by the school...regarding bilingual education." There were a wide range of terms and definitions being used, several inconsistencies in teachers' perceptions of the instructional goals of the bilingual education program, and many inconsistencies in what actually went on in the various "bilingual education" classrooms. The principal saw the curriculum design project as an opportunity to expose the school staff to the latest theory and research in language acquisition and second language learning. She believed the project could be used to improve the quality of instruction in the school.

The state provided a very simple curriculum matrix, and the principal had the flexibility to decide upon the school organization; timing of matrix components; managerial style; and assignment of teachers to all-English classes, such as art and physical education. The principal said: "As we went on, the design that the state originally gave us was changed eight or nine different times." The state education agency

staff who developed the curriculum were thrilled with the Eastman staff's efforts to modify the model for implementation.

Many of the requirements of the curriculum matrix were impossible to implement because of the realities of school organization and regulation. For example, in California only one in five students who should be served in bilingual programs is actually taught by trained bilingual certified staff. This is due to the major difficulty of finding and funding enough trained bilingual teachers.

Eastman already had a shortage of bilingual teachers. In its previous program bilingual teachers stayed with their class for the whole day, teaching in English during the "English" portions of the school day. Under the new curriculum design, the principal allocated those resources more efficiently by using bilingual teachers to teach only in Spanish to several classes. The school originally had 48 "bilingual" classrooms before the restructuring. The new model reduced that number to 30. The principal believes this method of allocating bilingual teachers means that more high quality instruction is delivered in the native language.

According to the principal, teacher reorganization also had implications for student groupings: "If you have the children grouped properly, imagine how much more content you can cover. And you can keep them on grade level." Even though the research and theory did not point to Eastman's specific classroom organization, the practical necessity of implementing the curriculum matrix led to new groupings. Classes were organized by dominant language and English language proficiency. For core academic subjects, students were grouped according to their grade reading levels. The old class combination of one-third fully English proficient, two-thirds LEP students, until recently required by California state law, was maintained for art, music, and physical education.

As the principal told us:

> *...when you see LEP and non-English speaking kids in a regular classroom where there is some sort of a bilingual program supposedly being done by an aide--because there aren't any bilingual teachers--they get a little ESL from somebody, and the rest of the time they are just trying to figure out what's going on...The difference [between that and the Eastman model] is dramatic, I think. For example, in second grade, our children are grouped appropriately in one language and get a full, balanced curriculum of all the content areas. They get all the language arts, all the math, social studies, and science, and all in a language that they understand, and all using the same kind of strategies that the English-speaking teacher is using across the hall. That is equitable education.*

One of the main benefits provided by the Eastman design is the fully balanced curriculum for both second language learners and fully English proficient students. The curriculum framework provides a phasing-in plan for the transition to an English program. When students do make the transition, they are typically at or near their grade level in content area knowledge, thereby eliminating the need for remediation in the mainstream classroom.

b. Francis Scott Key Elementary School

Francis Scott Key Elementary School started its Partial Immersion Program as a way of broadening the education of dominant English-speaking children. The school district does have a high percentage of LEP children, and this fact made the program possible. Thirty-nine percent of the students at Key School are LEP and are heavily concentrated in the early grades.

CCSSO staff learned from the principal that the partial immersion program actually is a foreign language "two-way" program in English and Spanish at the first and second grade levels. The program places native Spanish speakers, many of whom may be limited-English-proficient, in the same classrooms with native English speakers to study both language arts and content areas in Spanish and English. There are two teachers--a monolingual English teacher and a bilingual teacher who teaches only in Spanish. Spanish learning for the English dominant students is continually reinforced through interaction with native Spanish speaking students, while Spanish speakers learn to read and write in their native language and gain literacy skills in English.

The program serves 37 students out of a total school enrollment of 580. The plan calls for a grade to be added each year to the program so that the original first graders will go through the entire six grades in a two-way program.

The program was originally targeted at gifted and talented students from both Spanish dominant and English dominant backgrounds. However, identification of gifted and talented native Spanish speakers proved difficult because of inadequate assessment procedures. The program design therefore was changed to include students not identified by the teachers as gifted and talented but who, nevertheless, were Spanish dominant. This resulted in the enrollment of students who might be categorized as at risk of school failure. The focus of the program,

however, was not altered by including these students.

Participation in the program is based upon parental choice. Two factors affect the composition of the classes: the numbers of each language group in the school population and parents' receptivity to language immersion. English-dominant parents not only are more hesitant to enroll their children, but they are fewer than the Spanish-dominant families. Conversely, Spanish-speakers are more receptive to the program methodology, and they also make up a larger percentage of the school population. The result is that "selection" is more a question of how many English-dominant parents can be persuaded and how many of the interested Spanish-dominant children can be accommodated. Not all limited English proficient students are included.

Support for non-English-dominant students is built into the program through a multicultural curriculum and the extra preparation that goes into every step of the process. An unexpected but fortunate by-product of these strategies is the help received by children who may be at risk of school failure. The extra effort and attention given the students in the program benefit those at risk.

E. STAFF TRAINING

Virtually every school we visited had undertaken some new teacher inservice training as part of its efforts to provide better services to children. The highest-performing schools all had made substantial commitments to such training.

School administrators and faculty, as well as some state education agency (SEA) staff, made numerous suggestions for how states could help promote quality inservice training for teachers. A Florida principal remarked that states should be a greater source of information about recent research on effective teaching and that it would be especially helpful if the SEA could provide school staff with information about initiatives undertaken in other states. Both principals and staff at several schools told us that in order to be useful, the content of inservice training sessions should be tailored to the needs identified by school staff. Too often, inservice training was packaged for schools with no regard as to the strengths or weaknesses of a school or its staff. One school superintendent told us that every teacher in the school district had received training in Madeline Hunter techniques, but because teachers were not engaged in a discussion about the rationale and objectives of the training, it proved to be of little value to children in the classroom.

When training was well-matched to the needs of a school, it was usually because either a certain type or topic of training was requested by the faculty or their representatives on the management team, or because the training was chosen in response to needs revealed by an extensive evaluation of the school.

Teachers and principals in a number of schools told us that some of their most crucial inservice training had been in the area of teacher expectations and attitudes. Schools discovered through various means that their major problem was that teachers believed children from low-income or minority backgrounds could not achieve in school at the same levels as other students. This problem was frequently addressed through inservice training of school staff, and schools reported success in this area. School staff emphasized the importance of raising teacher expectations as the very first step toward improvement. More than one school spent an entire year focusing on the idea that all children can learn. Teachers at Willard Model School in Norfolk, Virginia, received 54 inservice trainings during the school's first year, and a main subject of these sessions was teacher attitudes toward educating minority students.

In schools that had opted to implement some form of school-based management, substantial inservice training was given during the earliest stages of implementing change as a way of preparing administrators and teachers to participate in improvements. The group of school staff chosen to serve on the management team received training in communication and management skills prior to or at the outset of the school year, and they participated in follow-up training only two or three times during a year. These team members then acted as leaders in the school community and were responsible for communicating what they had learned to their colleagues.

According to the principal at Olympia Heights Elementary School in Dade County, training conferences for teachers were sponsored by the district as part of the implementation of the school's School-Based Management/Shared Decisionmaking proposal. The assistant superintendent in charge of this program noted that, if asked to revise or improve the process of implementing school-based management, he would provide additional training in leadership and decisionmaking skills for school staff.

The principal and members of the School Planning and Management Team at Columbia Park Elementary School participated in summer training sessions with Dr. James Comer at Yale University prior to implementing the Comer Model of school manage-

ment at their school. This was one of the very few cases in which parents, as well as school staff, received training.

In both Connecticut and California, the state education agency provides inservice training in management and communication skills to schools participating in its local school improvement program. In these cases, the management team is again the primary recipient of inservice training.

There were examples of unsuccessful implementation of strategies learned through team training, generally because of insufficient time allotted to team members to plan and work with other staff once they were back in the school setting or poor communication among team members, especially between administrators and faculty. However, these examples were limited in number, and the team approach frequently resulted in successful implementation of a new management strategy.

Most schools provided some form of regular inservice training for all teachers. Sometimes this regular training, usually with a focus on instruction, was the main thrust of a school's improvement efforts. In other cases, it was in addition to the training of the management team. Not every school was using this regular training to best advantage.

The Detroit public school system has developed an excellent program of regular and comprehensive training as a tool for implementing the Alternatives to Special Education program. Long-term change, it decided, would require a change in attitude on the part of virtually every teacher, administrator, parent, and community member involved. The school system's department of special education invested four years of planning in the project, with a major focus on inservice training. The stage was set for the program through inservice training of chief administrators initiated by the Office of Special Education and funded by a grant from the U. S. Department of Education. The three-year training effort focused on the impact of the mandated special education laws and on the need for change in special education. Approximately 4,000 persons, including administrators, teachers, parents, and community members, received training through this program. Sessions focused on such topics as student cooperative learning, alternative approaches in reading instruction, resource program guidelines and operation, mediation as an instructional approach, and effective counseling with parents of handicapped children.

Detroit also was concerned that those who would be trained in Alternatives to Special Education not become isolated. Consequently, they trained sufficient numbers of professionals to have a "critical mass" within the district who "spoke the same language" and could critique the district's efforts. The district also provided inservice sessions for Instrumental Enrichment teachers and their principals throughout the year as additional support.

Special education leaders in the Detroit Public Schools told us that they have worked hard to develop the district's own capacity to train staff for the Dynamic Assessment and Instrumental Enrichment programs. Without building this capacity, they said, the district constantly faces a huge expense and difficulty in getting outside experts to train staff. The district's ability to train its own staff ensures the long-term duration of the program.

Kelson Elementary School in Baltimore City, Maryland, has also implemented an extensive teacher training program, the "Teacher Decision Making Project," (TDM) which was developed by the Maryland Department of Education. The purpose of the program is to help teachers make more informed decisions about their teaching behavior by increasing their awareness of the variety of ways they can respond to a given situation. The TDM project categorizes both instructional and classroom management activities into several groups. It then breaks down these activities into exhaustively detailed steps. The collection of steps are referred to as "routines." Activity of all sorts at all grade levels are analyzed and structured in this fashion. Hundreds of routines are used by students and teachers in any one day.

The State Department of Education funds the TDM program at Kelson through its disruptive youth program monies. This funding provides:

- Training for principals, master teachers, and instructional support staff;
- A team of state facilitators who work throughout the year with school staff; and
- Needed equipment, furnishings, etc. to make the school setting more appealing and inviting, such as audiovisual equipment and office furnishings.

The CCSSO visitor noted that the success of the TDM program seemed to come not necessarily from the content of TDM training, but from its ability to bring teachers together, to provide them with a structured analysis for their work, to allow careful thought and collegial discussion, to encourage the sharing of materials and ideas, and to bring a certain status to those who participate in the program. It appeared to be the excitement, energy and sense of control

experienced by teachers--more than the pedagogical or instructional insights provided by the TDM "routines" analysis--that drove the success of the program at Kelson.

The team building and analysis of teacher performance prompted by the TDM project at Kelson Elementary School was achieved at other schools through other means. At Central Park East II Elementary School, faculty perform a relatively informal but successful analysis of their instructional and management methods. Teachers meet twice a month for development sessions. In these sessions, teachers discuss how to meet the needs of individual children, what improvements to make in the curriculum, and a variety of other issues related to both student development and instruction.

Collaboration is a hallmark of teaching at CPE II and is structured into the activities of the school. CPE II has strong ties to Bank Street College, and in its early years, many of the teachers at CPE II had been educated at the City College Workshop on Open Education. Thus, there developed a shared vision of education among teachers at the school, and much of staff development has been achieved through collegial interaction. For example, once a month a teacher will choose a child to "staff." At a faculty meeting, the teacher presents a history of the child, discusses his/her feelings regarding the child and any problem, and is questioned by the staff regarding the student. Teachers report that this process greatly enhances their ability to serve the children they "staff."

Several districts visited had implemented significant, districtwide inservice training programs. The Rochester school district sets aside more than one full day each month for teacher training. Every first Wednesday students are excused from school so that teachers may spend a full day on training. On the fourth Wednesday, students are dismissed an hour early, and school principals conduct a needs assessment to help teachers evaluate student progress in their classes.

Other districts which have undertaken major efforts in teacher training are Pittsburgh, Dade County, and Prince George's County. Many school and district administrators noted that inservice training was provided by the state, usually in the form of funding but occasionally in actual training programs. The Benton Harbor, Michigan, school district had the capacity to do substantial inservice training because of funds provided by the state education agency for this purpose.

In addition to comments and observations about teacher inservice training, a school principal also recommended that states take a closer look at their teacher education and certification process. Florida is currently attempting to implement an apprenticeship program whereby a candidate for teacher certification could work toward certification by obtaining a bachelor of arts degree and logging a specified number of teaching hours under the direction of a master teacher. This may be a model for other states to consider.

F. ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In some states we visited, notably Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Michigan, and Florida, schools are required to administer minimum competency tests to students. In most cases, these were the test scores provided by school principals to show the success level of their students. These tests measure student progress in various subject areas, but with a focus on basic skills in reading and math. States deal with unacceptably low-performing schools differently. In Connecticut, action must be taken by a school if more than 80% of students do not achieve mastery. Schools must review their educational program and provide their students with remedial assistance.

This emphasis upon minimum competency tests is driven by state requirements. Most schools also use norm-referenced tests to measure student learning, such as the Stanford Achievement Test, the California Achievement Test, or the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and Cognitive Ability. However, perhaps because these are not state mandated and are not used as frequently for evaluating and comparing schools and school districts, they were mentioned less often by school, district, and state staff members during our discussions about student achievement.

The other fact is that minimum competency test scores make a better first impression. Student performance seems much higher on these minimum competency tests because the range of competencies tested is so limited. It was quite common to find in schools judged to be the very best for at-risk students that students scored in the 90th percentile or higher on the minimum competency tests but were scoring at the 50th percentile or even lower on norm-referenced tests. This emphasis upon minimum competencies may prompt increased efforts to raise the performance of students at the lowest levels, without an accompanying effort to improve student achievement at the highest levels. That is, minimum competency tests indicate clearly whether a student body is performing at very low levels, as compared to average levels. However, they do not demonstrate and, therefore, do not encourage schools to strive for very high achievement levels by students.

We discovered that opinions on student testing among both school and state education agency staff members varied greatly. A representative of the Connecticut Department of Education told us that there is a desire in the state to reduce the number of tests required by the state and the amount of time students spend on testing. However, this opinion is certainly not shared by all state officials we talked with.

In Rochester, we learned that principals are anxious to have more test data to use in planning and evaluation. In many districts and schools we visited, in addition to Rochester, staff increasingly are using test data to readjust and tailor their curriculum and instruction. Teachers and principals told us that test scores allowed them to focus on children's individual needs, especially when the tests are very specific about skill deficiencies. This was the case with Connecticut's Mastery Test, which has been in use for two years. It was authorized by the state legislature in the Education Evaluation and Remedial Assistance Act. It tests students in grades four, six and eight in math, language arts, reading and writing. Its congruence with the curriculum is higher than 60% but not as high as a criterion-referenced test.

However, although school and district administrators were increasingly making good use of test data, they were not universally pleased with the design or quantity of student evaluations. At Central Park East II Elementary School, school staff expressed frustration with the tests required by New York State because the staff disagrees with state mandates as to what lessons must be taught at what time in a student's education. Because they do not want student test scores to suffer inordinately, CPE II staff adhere somewhat to the curriculum dictated by the New York State tests, but they argue that this constrains their ability to respond to the instructional needs of children. For example, within CPE II's very student-oriented instructional approach, a teacher might decide not to teach a specific skill in grade three because students would be better prepared for it in grade 4, when they will also be in this teacher's class. If the state test evaluates student mastery of this skill at grade 3, their test scores will suffer if they have not received the instruction at that grade. Staff hope for the development and use of new tests.

Another activity that schools seemed to be initiating was test preparation and the study of test-taking skills. A few teachers and administrators told us that students in suburban public schools and private schools had been coached on test-taking skills for years, and they believed it was time to offer this advantage to low-income minority students. At Charles Drew Elementary School in Dade County, the principal hired an expert on minority performance on standardized tests to train faculty in teaching test-taking skills to students in grades two-five.

In general, we were not shown any "miraculous" test data demonstrating huge and rapid gains in student achievement. We usually saw data that showed steady but gradual improvements in various subject areas. There was some indication that students were improving more quickly in mathematics, as measured by standardized tests, than in reading or writing. This was true in a few schools and efforts were being undertaken to revamp the reading programs.

G. PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The schools we visited all had made clear efforts to involve parents in the education of their children, but they had pursued this goal in diverse ways, with different objectives and with varying degrees of success. Some efforts were based on the belief that parents should be given a degree of control over critical issues in the school, such as management and curriculum. At the other end of the spectrum, attempts to increase parent involvement focused simply on enticing more parents to attend PTA meetings and Open School Nights. Most schools were making sincere and substantial efforts to foster some type of improvement in the parent-school relationship, but often, their successes were limited. Although some schools had successfully increased the degree of parent involvement, we found no good model of a parent education program which moved beyond involvement. In fact, only three schools had any kind of parent education program at all.

One of the most interesting sets of dynamics between a school and students' parents was at Central Park East II Elementary School (CPE II). CPE II has an outstanding reputation for attending to the needs of individual children, and as part of this process, it engenders a high level of parent participation. Parents are required to come for an initial interview with a child when they are seeking admission for the child. At the beginning of each year, a questionnaire to parents gains important information about each child that only a regular caretaker can provide. There is regular written correspondence with parents in the form of both letters and newsletters. A number of events are held specifically for parents, including picnics, a basketball game, trips to the circus, an Open School Night, a baseball game, and two concerts.

If a child at CPE II has any problem in class, a "Family Conference" is held of parents, student, and a teacher. CPE II consciously decided to include students in these conferences to make them part of

the discussion about their performance and steps that must be taken to improve it. The staff deliberately avoid an adversarial role with parents. Their goal is to reach a consensus about what to do for the child.

A report on CPE II and the other Central Park East schools observed that, in some respects, there is almost too much parent involvement (Bensman, 1987). Because the programs are alternative and very different from the schools most parents attended, parents retain some degree of skepticism about the program. The staff, therefore, must pay greater attention to parents in order to maintain their support and keep them "on board." A discussion with a parent revealed that it is often the parents of minority children, accustomed to a more traditional school setting, who are most uncomfortable with the program.

At Silver Lane Elementary School in East Hartford, parent participation dramatically improved over a few years. In 1983, only 6% of parents were members of the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), and the principal was the PTO president. By 1986, parent participation had risen to 98%, according to the former principal.

The increased involvement directly resulted from the first decisions made by the school's Action Planning Committee, which sought to initiate a community project. The project chosen was the building of a "Playscape." Parents raised $13,000 through letter solicitations to businesses, and the school received $10,000 from the town to build the Playscape. Local businesses donated paint, wood, and services, and a contest was held to name the park. The Playscape is used by the whole community, creating a good image for the school in the town. One of the parent organizers told us, "Every father who has his kids on Sundays uses it."

Parents' involvement through the Playscape project led to greater parent involvement in all other aspects of the school. Parents stop into the principal's office to chat and have coffee, and even visit the school social worker when there is no serious problem. In some cases, parents have grown too comfortable and have been visiting classrooms and interrupting class. The principal said they were working to solve this problem diplomatically.

The Parent Teacher Organization meetings are now standing-room-only, and so many parents wanted to attend last year's school musical that a second performance was required. Because it is a model, representatives from Silver Lane Elementary gave a workshop on effective school-parent relations at a recent conference sponsored by the state education agency.

The management team at Clara Barton Elementary School has set a goal of 50% in-school parent contact. Parents are "expected to attend school functions and to interact with the school," it says. In addition, teachers make home visits. Parents also provide service as library aides, but the librarian complained--somewhat proudly--that once the parents have been trained, they then use their training to obtain paying jobs elsewhere.

At Madison Elementary School, community relations had been poor and parents resisted being required to participate in their children's schooling and disciplining, according to the principal. She said that parents needed "inservice training" as well as the teachers. Parents are now invited on field trips and to evening activities and are given a substantial amount of notice about these events. The principal said parents are still not as visible as teachers would like, but there are "good vibes." The principal believed that "unfortunately, the more content parents are with a school, the less visible they are in the schooling process."

Columbia Park Elementary School has adopted the Comer Model, which presents a three-tiered pattern of parent involvement. A small number of parents are involved in the actual governance of the school and are integrally involved in issues of instruction and management as members of the School Planning and Management Team. A larger group of parents participate in the school as leaders in school events and as frequent volunteers. The majority of parents remain involved only at the level of Parent Teacher Association attendance, but their number is much higher than at most schools, especially those with large enrollments of at-risk children. Comer's model has been very effective in some ways--the school experiences better than 90% participation in PTA meetings and Open School Nights. However, some observers complained that for most parents, involvement remains at the level of potluck suppers and bake sales.

It was this issue of the degree of parent involvement and the extent to which schools encouraged and even trained parents to take a more active role in their children's learning on which virtually all our schools fell short. Three schools had parent education programs, but only one of these focused on parenting skills. Willard Model Elementary School in Norfolk, Virginia, established a parenting center that provides an impressive array of workshops on topics related to health, child care, personal management and other topics. However, the center is open only during regular school hours.

The goals of the other two "parent education" programs were to increase the literacy of parents.

Chester Dewey Elementary School in Rochester, New York, has an Adult English for Speakers of Other Languages program (ESOL) as part of its community schools program. The ESOL program serves approximately 25 adults.

George G. Kelson Elementary School in Baltimore City, Maryland, provides adult basic education courses for parents, and school staff are now planning to offer GED classes as well. In addition, we were told that teachers hold workshops for parents to explain the school program and their expectations for parent follow-through at home. One teacher indicated the success of these workshops when he said that, "Parent liaison has developed into parent involvement." Despite these moderate successes, some teachers and administrators singled out the need for improved parent involvement and parent-teacher relations as a major concern.

H. COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT

Community groups, businesses, and other outside organizations participated actively in many of the schools we visited, but to varying degrees and in different ways.

Chester Dewey Elementary School in Rochester, New York, is part of New York State's Schools as Community Sites Project. The goal of the project is to facilitate maximum school participation and ownership by the parents and community of the school. It operates on an extended day program, 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. six days a week. Regular school hours are 9:10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The school received $150,000 from the state to implement the project.

Some of the additional services are provided by school staff members, who have been encouraged to develop programs responsive to "students' individual achievement and learning levels." Teachers are compensated for their time in planning and providing these programs at an hourly rate of $17. Teachers must submit a proposal at the beginning of the school year describing the program they hope to implement. Programs provided by teachers include Big Brother/Big Sister, Adult English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Drama Club, and Reading Club.

Chester Dewey Elementary also receives services from two community-based agencies. The Lewis Street Center provides services to low-income families in the neighborhood of Dewey Elementary including the Big Brother/Big Sister program, a Foster Grandparent Program, a Neighborhood Action Program, and a youth service program. Marketview Heights also contributes its services to Dewey Elementary. It provides winter clothing for children, works to ensure the safety of the school, and participates in other ways requested by the school.

Five years ago, schools in East Hartford, Connecticut, entered into partnerships with businesses in a plan initiated by the Chamber of Commerce. The number of businesses willing to participate was quite low until Northeast Utilities provided funding for workshops for business employees about how they could contribute to local schools. After these workshops, the number of partnerships increased from six to 50.

Silver Lane Elementary School in East Hartford is in partnership with both Pizza Hut and a local bank. (Pizza Hut has initiated a partnership with all East Hartford schools in its "Book It" campaign; Willard Model Elementary School in Norfolk, Virginia, also is a partner with Pizza Hut in a reading program.) The bank is more directly involved with Silver Lane Elementary. Bank employees chaperon the school's "Beach Day," fund birthday and holiday parties, provide a banking program for students, and fund the school's media center.

The school also provides services to the bank. Silver Lane students decorate it at Christmas, and last year, after a suicide at the bank, the school sent its crisis management team of social workers and a nurse into the bank to counsel employees.

Charles Drew Elementary School in Dade County, Florida, has enlisted community support in a number of ways. This year Drew adopted the use of a school uniform to reduce the cost of student clothing and to increase school pride and discipline. In an effort to make the uniforms affordable for every child, the school will buy uniform material in bulk and contract with a local vocational education center to make the uniforms.

Also this year, Drew opened a Saturday School to provide tutoring in math and reading. The Saturday School was intended as a community project with volunteer help from area high school students. It was so successful that the class offerings have been expanded to include computer skills, band, and language and oratory skills. The program runs from 9 a.m. to 12 noon every Saturday. Teachers are paid an hourly wage from a $15,000 grant by a local foundation, but the Saturday School does not receive any additional funds from the school district. The PTA recruited a local restaurant to provide breakfast and lunch for students in the Saturday program.

IV. STATE INTERVENTION

CCSSO staff found very different patterns of state intervention with schools, both across and within states. With the notable exception of schools visited in California, Connecticut, and Maryland, most schools had received minimal support or intervention from the state. The state education agency often was the source of funds for inservice training, compensatory education, and other services. However, these funds were administered by the district, and the schools served never were involved directly with the state. When we asked school administrators about their relationship with the state, they frequently responded that there was none.

However, two schools had received a substantial infusion of state funds not funneled through the district to improve their programs. Neither school interacted with state education agency staff or received any other form of assistance beyond funding.

Willard Model Elementary School in Norfolk, Virginia, is such an example. The idea of establishing a model elementary school for low-income children in the inner city was initiated by Charles Robb when governor of Virginia. Robb recommended the idea to Virginia's General Assembly, which approved the proposal and provided state funds for the school--$98,000 for the planning year, $210,000 for the second year, and $100,000 each year thereafter.

A new principal was chosen for Willard, and each staff position in the school was declared vacant. Teacher selection was based on a commitment to serving at-risk children and their willingness to learn to use computers for instruction. The staff at Willard is very enthusiastic about their work, and the principal believes the enthusiasm and commitment are the primary factors in the school's success, rather than the provision of state funds.

Chester Dewey Elementary School in Rochester, New York, is another school that has received substantial state funding. It was chosen to participate in the pilot phase of New York State's Community Schools Project; as such, Dewey has an extended day program in which services are provided to both students and their families before and after school. The pilot stage of the project is expected to last three to four years. This year the school received $150,000 in state funds to initiate the program. Asked what the state could do to support their efforts, faculty members at the school suggested the state education agency "keep the money rolling in" to support the special programs.

The New York state education agency recommended Dewey as an exemplary school for us to visit, and the school is providing excellent services for children. However, district level staff in Rochester asked us to also visit a second school, considered more representative of the success achieved by a "regular" school--that is, a school that had not received substantial state funding. The district staff believed it was important for us to visit this second school because only a small number of schools in the country will be able to receive extraordinary funds from beyond the district.

A few schools we visited received limited state support, either technical assistance or funding, for a specific program or service. We found more substantial support in two programs initiated by the Maryland state education agency and described in other sections of this report. One is Freetown Elementary School, which received financial and other assistance to establish an early childhood education program for three and four-year-olds. As mentioned earlier, the program was initiated at the behest of the state superintendent of education, as a pilot site. The state paid 100% of the program costs until recently, when the district assumed 40%. The second Maryland example of state assistance for a specific program within a school was the teacher training supported at George Kelson Elementary School in Baltimore. Inservice training and the funding for it were provided by state education agency staff.

We visited three schools in two states--California and Connecticut--with large-scale, hands-on involvement by a state education agency in their school improvement efforts. In these examples, the state initiated the intervention but had been welcomed by the school.

A. Connecticut's School Effectiveness Unit

Silver Lane Elementary School in East Hartford, Connecticut, sought help from the Connecticut Department of Education's Bureau of School and Program Development. This bureau was created to implement the Effective Schools research developed by Ron Edmonds, Larry Lezotte, and Wilbur Brookover. The bureau was originally funded solely with federal funds--ESEA Title IV-A and B (eliminated in 1982) and Title I/Chapter 1. In 1983, the state began providing some support for the Bureau by funding four staff positions. The bureau

now houses the state and federally-funded School Effectiveness Unit as well as the federal Chapter 1, Chapter 2, bilingual education, child nutrition, and race/national origin/sex desegregation programs.

The essence of the Connecticut School Effectiveness program is technical assistance, not monetary support for school improvement. Furthermore, assistance is provided primarily through people rather than through materials. All the work is research-based. One of the Bureau's staff members described the work as bringing "research to the schools...We will work with you to improve your school." Connecticut spends nearly all of its Chapter 2 money on the technical assistance work of this unit.

A school's participation in the program is voluntary and is initiated by either a local superintendent or principal. According to the state's liaison to Silver Lane Elementary, even if a school's interest in obtaining the services of the Bureau is initiated by the principal, the Bureau is careful "not to go directly to the schools. We always go through the central office." Another staff person told us: "We are playing within the school system. We don't want action plans contradictory to district policy."

In addition to support from both the superintendent and the principal, Connecticut's school improvement process calls for a vote of approval from the school staff before implementation. In fact, some principals have expressed an interest in the process but have been unable to implement it because the margin of approval within the school faculty was too narrow.

The state staff working with a school becomes a major link among the superintendent, principal, and teachers. In the early stages of implementation, the state representative visits a school every two weeks. He or she then visits once a month for a year until it is "on its own." The state representative to Silver Lane said: "We stick with our schools. If we don't, this project will become one of many that come and go."

The state provides varied kinds of assistance, beginning with an assessment of the current effectiveness of a school. State education agency staff initially developed interview guides and questionnaires for this purpose, but discontinued use of the interview guides because of their cost.

There are many reasons for the success of the school effectiveness unit. The leadership of the Connecticut Department of Education, at many levels, is very thoughtful, according to the CCSSO interviewer, and the staff of the school improvement unit is especially talented. The size of the state is another important element; Connecticut's state education agency staff can travel to any school in a day and, therefore, can interact on a regular basis with school staff.

There has been some disagreement within the state agency about the appropriate role for the state in school improvement efforts. Some believe the state should "stop at the district door." Other staff are very enthusiastic about the role the state has been able to play as a catalyst for local school improvement efforts. A member of the school improvement unit staff told us that Silver Lane Elementary School is "the finest example of a state role with a school in the country."

B. The California Local Educational Reform Network

We visited two schools in California, Garfield Elementary School in Stockton and Calvin Simmons Junior High School in Oakland, that were part of the California Local Educational Reform Network (C-LERN). C-LERN is a process initiated by the California state education agency to help schools improve their management, instruction, and climate. The essential components of the process were developed by a private company, SAGE Analytics International, and are based on the theory that success is best achieved by avoiding failure. This theory, first developed by Bell Laboratories in the 1950s, is called "fault-free analysis." Sage identifies potential areas of failure in a school and works with school staff to alter these patterns of failure. The key component of the program is a series of school assessments and prescriptions conducted by SAGE Analytics.

Funded by the California Department of Education, SAGE works with 54 schools. Much of its service is provided free because the company considers itself to be at a research and development stage in its work with schools. However, each school district must pay $10,000 a year to SAGE to cover some of the services it receives. No additional funding is provided to a school for its participation in C-LERN.

SAGE provides a field representative for each school who visits at least once every week and is in frequent contact with the principal. Each field representative, working with approximately 20 schools, coaches principals to help them increase their ability to negotiate with the district, work with the school staff, and implement change. The field representative also acts as an advocate for the school with both the state education agency and the district office, obtaining additional resources and removing procedural and other barriers to improvement. Although field representatives presently are SAGE

employees, the state education agency's long-term plan is to fill this role with its own staff.

The state education agency representative we interviewed believed the appropriate role of the state in school improvement is to: 1) monitor; 2) collect data; 3) provide resources; and 4) provide staff development. She said that state officials "are the drivers" in the C-LERN process and that school staff perceive C-LERN as a "state" project. The state's financial involvement in C-LERN thus far seems to have been to support training opportunities for school staff and provision of new teaching materials. The state also monitors C-LERN schools more closely than others in order to assess the effectiveness of the process.

There are a number of common elements in these two examples of state intervention in local school improvement efforts. In both models, the state (or its agent) performs a detailed assessment of many indicators of school performance. In fact, both state education agencies originally used staff interviews as the primary form of collecting information for the initial assessment, but both decided that questionnaires were more cost-effective. In both states the assessment process advantage is in reaching every member of the school faculty and administration, as well as every parent with a child at the school.

Under both state programs, schools form management teams that set priorities based on the assessments completed by state agency staff. Because the results of the assessment used in the C-LERN process are considered definitive, these results tend to prescribe for the school management team the priorities that should be set for the school. The team at Silver Lane Elementary has somewhat more latitude in defining the needs of the school.

The state education agency in both cases is the source of training for both administrators and teachers, providing summer training for school staff participating in the school improvement programs.

State education agency representatives to the school serve as its advocate and as a means of regular communication among state, district, and school staff. This communication is an important aspect of both models because it facilitates a faster response by these agencies to the needs of the school.

Both the Connecticut and California models are research-based. The Connecticut program is based on the effective schools research, and the California program is derived from research on failure avoidance developed in industrial and military settings. The effective schools research was designed for schools, while the failure avoidance model is now being adapted for a school setting. This difference may prove to be a strong argument in favor of the model based on effective schools research if only because that research has been tested in schools and data exist to prove it can work. The failure avoidance strategy has a relatively short track record in schools, although the California Department of Education is trying to get funding for a long-term study of the effectiveness of the process.

Also an important difference of the California program is its reliance on a proprietary process of computer analysis available only through SAGE Analytics International. This may be a major shortcoming because it potentially could adversely affect the cost of the program both to schools and to the state.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING A STATE ROLE IN LOCAL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The Council of Chief State School Officers is especially interested in strengthening the role of state education agencies in promoting school improvement. We know from our school visits and related work that state education agencies are engaged in an increasing number of initiatives to restructure schools to improve educational services for all students and particularly those at risk. We saw first-hand examples of effective, direct state intervention and we have discussed with local practitioners their views on what more states can do.

What follows are recommendations to enhance state efforts to improve schooling for disadvantaged youngsters. Some are drawn directly from statements made by the administration and faculty of schools we visited. Others have been formulated by CCSSO staff members in response to our observations and discussions during visits to schools. The recommendations address many areas of school improvement.

1. Technical Assistance--CCSSO observers found successful models of direct state education agency participation in local school improvement efforts that should be studied by other state education agencies for possible application in their states. State education agency technical assistance activities fall into a number of categories, including:

a. Incentives for implementing improvements--The commitment of state technical assistance can serve as a strong incentive for schools to initiate change. A state's direct involvement with a school lends validity and status to a school's efforts and provides an additional avenue of resources.

b. Assessment of school performance--State education agencies can provide many types of school assessment, including in-depth evaluation and analysis of a school program based on data collected through interviews and questionnaires, or comprehensive and detailed analysis of already existing student test data to provide helpful information to schools seeking to improve their educational services.

   In addition to these in-depth forms of assessment, which are usually initiated at the request of a school or district, some states are reviewing student test data by school, rather than by district, to discover whether schools throughout a state are performing at acceptable levels.

c. Application of recent research--School staff told us that state education agencies can support their efforts by disseminating information about current research on school management, instruction, and related issues. In addition to the simple provision of this information, state education agencies should consider directly assisting schools in the application of research. Agency staff experienced in school improvement techniques and well-versed in the most recent research developments can provide insight, support, and resources to schools attempting to implement new ideas.

d. Advocacy for schools--The state education agency staff member assigned to work with an improving school can sometimes effectively assume the role of advocate for the school with both the state and local education agency, as well as with outside groups. The state education agency representative can help school staff better define their needs and negotiate with appropriate agencies for assistance and resources.

e. Staff training--State education agency involvement in providing inservice teacher training can play a major role in school improvement and is discussed below.

2. Models of Successful Schools--Every state has successful schools enrolling large proportions of at-risk students. These successful schools are not identical, differing in governance structure, curricula, and instructional strategies. Most schools are hidden from the view of other educators that could learn from their success. An important state education agency function would be to identify and describe these schools, analyze and discuss their secrets to success, and publish and disseminate information on these models to all districts and schools in the state.

3. Teacher Training--Some state education agencies have played a key role in training teachers in schools with high proportions of disadvantaged students, either by funding districts to provide training programs or by sponsoring inservice training for teachers in certain schools. We encourage states to improve the provision of this crucial assistance to schools, either through on-

going training resources or specific programs. According to the many educators with whom we spoke, the key to success of such training is the degree to which it matches the needs of students and teachers.

States may especially want to consider serving as the sponsoring agency that invites teams of administrators and faculty from schools with at-risk students to participate in team-building and training sessions during the summer, with periodic follow-up during the school year.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, states can play a key role in encouraging and providing inservice training in the areas of teacher attitudes and expectations for poor or minority children.

4. Early Childhood Education--The staff at many schools told us how important it is for children, especially those from low-income families, to participate in a preschool program. Kindergarten teachers consistently volunteered that children who had gone to a Head Start or other early childhood programs performed better in school than those who had not. Our observation was that early childhood programs provided by schools were done with state, rather than local, funding. This was true without exception in the relatively small sample of schools we studied. Further, the staff at several schools specifically called upon the state to make early childhood education a priority and to commit funding for these programs.

5. Instruction--Schools in which students are mastering both basic and higher order skills are those in which special attention has been given to issues of instruction. Among the schools we visited, the school that achieved the greatest breadth and depth in the education of its students was also the one which employed the most innovative instructional methods. State education agencies should encourage experimentation and innovation in instruction by providing information to schools about research and successful implementation of alternative methods of instruction.

For example, research about issues such as student grouping, tracking, and retention is not adequately known by school personnel and, therefore, is not universally applied. Although the exemplary schools we visited generally did not track students, this practice is common in most schools. Disseminating information to administrators and teachers about strategies for and results of teaching students at multiple levels within one classrom would help a greater number of schools adopt these practices. There are many such areas of instruction in which school planning should be informed by current research.

According to both expert researchers and school staff, one of the most dramatic and useful steps that could be taken by state education agencies to promote innovation in instruction would be to develop mechanisms for granting waivers to schools attempting to implement promising practices in instruction. The areas affected by such waivers might include instructional time on specific subject areas, sequence of instructional topics within a subject area, and allocation of resources provided by state compensatory education programs. Such waivers would have to be accompanied by stringent accountability measures.

6. Assessment, Evaluation, and Accountability

a. Effective use of minimum competency tests--State education agencies can help ensure that the minimum competency tests mandated by so many states in recent years provide useful, specific information about student learning to better enable schools to accurately assess student needs. In addition, states can use minimum competency tests to assess overall school performance and to determine which schools need assistance to improve student performance.

b. Going beyond minimum competency tests--State-mandated minimum competency tests have encouraged schools with large percentages of low-performing students to focus heavily on instruction of basic skills. This has often resulted in a lack of instruction in higher order literacies for at-risk students. State education agencies can play a critical role in challenging schools to ensure that the education of low-income or minority students includes instruction in both basic skills and higher literacies to enable students to achieve at the full range of competencies. State design of new methods of assessment to go beyond testing basic skills and to accurately evaluate other competencies would be a tremendous contribution toward this goal.

7. Categorical Programs--CCSSO interviewers discovered numerous problems and difficulties in the implementation of federal and state categorical programs--compensatory education (e.g., Chapter 1), special education, and bilingual education--which state education agencies could help to remedy.

a. Dissemination of Information--The absence at the school level of accurate information regarding federal and state regulations governing categorical programs is partly responsible for schools'

unwillingness to make substantial changes in the way they provide services under these programs.

In addition to needing correct information about regulations, schools are also without access to recent research on the best methods of providing services through these programs to children with extra educational needs. Without this information, school staff have no basis on which to improve their programs. State education agencies could provide crucial assistance by conveying these types of information to schools.

b. Incentives--State education agencies can encourage schools to develop their capacity to provide effective, innovative services using categorical programs. These incentives could be positive, in the form of additional freedom and resources with which to implement better programs. States are also in a position to prompt schools to take action by evaluating and reviewing school performance in this area and by giving assistance where it is needed.

c. Technical Assistance--State education agency staff could assist schools in the implementation of research-based programs to provide improved services to students with extra educational needs. Agency staff might be especially helpful in working with schools to examine how the various categorical programs could be coordinated with each other and within the regular school program.

d. Assessment--Currently, students too often receive inappropriate services because school staff incorrectly assess their needs. For example, a student may be placed in special education although his or her actual need is to be in a bilingual classroom. State education agencies could develop and/or provide more effective methods of evaluating student needs so that students receive services truly helpful to them.

e. Teacher Training--A consistent problem experienced by schools with the administration of categorical programs is obtaining well-trained staff and allocating this resource effectively. In bilingual education, schools find themselves with grossly inadequate numbers of trained teachers. In special education and Chapter 1, school staff are troubled that the skills of their teachers are being poorly used because of perceived or actual limits on how these teachers may allocate their time. State education agencies can explore and adopt policies to assist schools in obtaining qualified staff for these programs and to encourage innovation in the allocation of staff resources within schools.

8. Family Involvement, Education, and Support

a. Involvement--States can assist schools in increasing family involvement by identifying schools with high levels of parent participation and disseminating information about their success to other schools through written documents, workshops, and other means. States that collaborate directly with schools in improvement efforts should consider the model of school-based management and planning developed by Dr. James Comer of Yale University. The Comer Model involves parents as members of the school management team to help direct the goals and overall climate of the school. The Comer Model targets parents who have traditionally had limited successful involvement with the schools and provides opportunities for involvement at many levels--e.g., as volunteers, aides, supporters of school efforts, and in governance capacities.

b. Education--A direct way for state education agencies to promote family education programs would be to provide funding and technical assistance to schools or districts to develop and implement such programs. One of the major deterrents to schools' provision of such programs is lack of resources.

The new federal Family Support Act mandates the provision of educational services to many parents, especially young and single parents, who receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children. States and school districts could enhance the effectiveness of these educational services by providing them in conjunction with the schooling of the children of such individuals. Research indicates that adults' interest in learning increases when it is tied to education of their children.

c. Support--Efforts such as the Community Schools Program sponsored by the New York Education Department, in which schools are the site for the provision of a variety of services for both students and their families, offer exceptional opportunities for the provision of both parent education and support programs. State education agencies should study the results of such efforts and consider sponsoring the development of such programs at school sites in their states. Schools could serve as the location for the provision of traditional schooling for youngsters, for adult education or GED classes for their parents, and even for day care services for children while their parents are in school.

9. Pilot Programs--Some school and district staff suggested that the state education agency could provide support and resources for pilot programs

developed by a school or district to improve schools for at-risk children.

10. State Policy Research and Development--We found several problem areas for schools which often hindered their progress in improving the quality of education for students. Solutions to these problems were not readily apparent and there may be a crucial state policy research and development role in searching for workable and effective ways to meet these challenges. Such problems include how to respond to high school mobility rates among low-income students; how to integrate federal and state categorical programs into regular, whole school improvement efforts; how to form smaller schools; and how to provide both academic and non-academic support to at-risk children which is often provided to middle-income children by their families and communities.

Conclusion

CCSSO staff visited schools around the country that were providing effective services for children at risk of school failure. However, despite these examples of success, most schools have innumerable issues to address before they can be deemed truly effective in providing quality education for disadvantaged children. Even most schools that are at the top in this regard, whose students are mastering basic skills and feeling more positive about their academic experiences, must address an outstanding deficiency in the education they provide. Improvements in basic skills instruction have often not been accompanied by educational experiences that foster the development of higher order critical and creative thinking skills. If improvements in the education of students at risk focus solely on basic skills, we will be condemning these children, their communities; and our nation to building a labor force of inadequate or only marginally adequate workers.

There is a continuum of issues to be addressed in working toward providing a quality education for at-risk children. CCSSO staff members discovered many schools that were moving along this continuum with exceptional skill and thoughtfulness. We observed effective processes instituted by schools to provide mechanisms for evaluating their progress, determining the best strategies for improvement, and implementing change. The schools we visited had initiated innovative programs in many areas--instruction, management, early intervention, categorical programs, parent involvement, staff training, student assessment, and community involvement--that could serve as models for other schools.

CCSSO staff members found state education agencies that have provided crucial assistance in a variety of areas to better enable schools to move along this path toward success. The success of these agencies provides leadership in determining the most appropriate and helpful roles for state education agencies in facilitating local school improvement efforts.

CCSSO staff members visited schools in which low-income and otherwise disadvantaged students were achieving at levels equivalent to those of children from the more prosperous neighborhoods of our nation. Although such outstanding schools are too few and far between, these few stand as a challenge to us to provide high quality education for all our children.

RESOURCES

Applebee, Arthur N.; Langer, Judith A.; and Mullis, Ina V. S. "Learning To Be Literate in America: Reading, Writing, and Reasoning." The National Assessment of Educational Progress, Educational Testing Service, March 1987.

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Council of Chief State School Officers. "Family Support, Education, and Involvement: A Guide for State Action." November 1989.

Council of Chief State School Officers. "Restructuring Schools: A Policy Statement of the Council of Chief State School Officers." November 1989.

_____. "School Success for Limited English Proficient Students: The Challenge and State Response." February 1990.

_____. "Success for All In A New Century: A Report by the Council of Chief State School Officers on Restructuring Education." November 1989.

APPENDIX
SCHOOLS VISITED FOR THIS STUDY

California

Calvin Simmons Junior High School
2101 35th Avenue
Oakland, CA 94601
(415) 534-0610
Principal: Jose Valles

Garfield Elementary School
1670 East 6th Street
Stockton, CA 95206
(209) 944-4223
Principal: Sybil Johnson

Eastman Avenue Elementary School
4112 East Olympic Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90023
(213) 269-0456
Principal: Dorothy Padilla

Connecticut

Silver Lane Elementary School
15 Mercer Avenue
East Hartford, CT 06118
(203) 282-3368
Principal: Paula Erickson

Florida

Charles Drew Elementary School
1775 N. W. 60th Street
Miami, FL 33142
(305) 691-8021
Principal: Frederick A. Morley

Olympia Heights Elementary School
9797 S. W. 40th Street
Miami, FL 33165
(305) 221-3821
Principal: Clifford Herrman

Louisiana

Medard Hillaire Nelson Elementary School
1300 Milton Street
New Orleans, LA 70122
(504) 283-6931
Principal: Joseph Taylor

Maryland

Columbia Park Elementary School
1901 Kent Village Drive
Landover, MD 20785
(301) 773-8402
Principal: Patricia Green

Freetown Elementary School
7904 Freetown Road
Glen Burnie, MD 21061
(301) 761-2544
Principal: Martha Collison

George G. Kelson Elementary School
701 Gold Street
Baltimore, MD 21217
(301) 396-0800
Principal: Wyatt Coger

Michigan

The Academic Academy
1995 Union Street
Benton Harbor, MI 49022
(616) 927-3118
Principal: Renee Williams

Hutchins Middle School
8820 Woodrow Wilson
Detroit, MI 48206
(313) 494-2123
Principal: Peter Van Lowe

New York

Central Park East II Elementary School
215 East 99th Street
New York, NY 10029
(212) 860-5992
Director: Esther Rosenfeld

Clara Barton Elementary School (P.S. #2)
190 Reynolds Street
Rochester, NY 14608
(716) 235-2820
Principal: Barbara McGriff

Chester Dewey Elementary School (P.S. #14)
200 University Avenue
Rochester, NY 14605
(716) 325-6738
Principal: George Liedecker

Pennsylvania

Madison Elementary School
3401 Milwaukee Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
(412) 622-8460
Principal: Vivien Williams

Verner Elementary School
700 First Street
Verona, PA 15147
(412) 828-1000
Principal: Felicia J. Renard

Virginia

Francis Scott Key Elementary School
2300 North Key Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22201
(703) 558-2917
Principal: Paul Wireman

Willard Model Elementary School
3425 Tidewater Drive
Norfolk, VA 23509
(804) 441-1891
Principal: Lillian Brinkley